



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LAJÉVARI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DUBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 3, 1985
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA.
INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI
TAPE NO.: 1
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 01

AMOUZEGAR, JAMSHID, AS PRIME MINISTER

AMOUZEGAR, JAMSHID, BACKGROUND & CHARACTER OF

ARYAMEHR TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

CHERIK-NA-YE FADAI-E KHALGH

KOJAHEDIN-E KHALGH, SAZAN

KOJTEHEDI, MOHAMMAD-ALI

REVOLUTION OF 1979

REVOLUTION, CAUSES OF

SAVAK

SHAH, STUDENTS AND THE

UNIVERSITIES

01

IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghamee

Date: February 2, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape no.: 1

Q. Dr. Zarghamee, would you prefer to conduct this interview in Persian or in English? All right, I'll start in English and we can switch back and forth as you feel comfortable.

Now we'd like to get some information about your background first. We'd like to start with your father and his family background. Please describe it in as much detail as you would like.

A. OK. I come primarily from a family of military men. My grandfather was in Reza Shah's army. He became the Commander of the Army at the time of Reza Shah. My father went to military academy, also, and he became also the Commander of the ground forces in late 1960s. My family is also very religious at the same time. In fact, my grandfather retained his beard all through his commandship. And my

ZARGHAMEE-1

father has a beard now, but he didn't have the beard at the time of the Shah.

But it's a sort of a combination of religion and military that was sort of perpetuated through the part of the family or background that I was associated with. Before that, I think we were more in military also. My great-grandfather etc. All the pictures of these people wear medals and military uniforms. That, I think, pretty much sums up my family background.

We were not rich, but we were not poor also. I mean, he had Although both my father and my grandfather had the highest office in the military. And supposedly the power was derived from the military. But we never had a sort of affluent mode of life. Both my grandfather and father were living with a salary, and that's it.

Q. Your father was the only son who also followed his father's ...?

A. No, my uncle -- I have an uncle who became a colonel, but he never went up much beyond a colonel in the army. He wasn't studious. There is -- my grandfather and my father -- I think I've gained a lot of, some of my character genetically. I'm very precise and very hard-working.

Q. Coming from a military background?

A. Yes. Relatively law-obedient, but at the same time very ... especially my grandfather had a lot of intellectual ability which was very unique because of the fact that he was in military and religion. But he was an intellectual in his own creed.

Q. When you say "religious," could you define that a little bit more. I mean, was he ...?

A. He ... wrote a book. The book is called ... which he published only 80 copies and handed to only his trusted and worthy friends, which did not include -- although he was friendly to lots of these ayatollahs -- did not include the ayatollahs. Because he thought that many of the ayatollahs really didn't know what they were talking about.

When it came to problems associated with philosophy of Islam, he had done a lot of research and he had written this book, which was half-Arabic, half-Farsi. I mean, sort of classic in its style. And it was very hard to read because it was intermingled, Farsi and Arabic. It was called Velayat and "something" I don't recall right now the second word.

But it was something that essentially went in depth into the

relationship of a Moslem, a Shi'a Moslem and vali.

And this was written ... He died in 1979, before the revolution, just a couple of months before the revolution. In fact, when they wanted to bury him in Qom, inside Hazrat-e Ma'soumeh <Shrine of Ma'soumeh>, in a shrine, the revolutionaries thought that this was the body of General Oveissi, who had undergone a heart-attack. And that was essentially a lot of ... I remember my father went to Shariatmadari and ... anyway, they didn't let him be buried inside the shrine at that time. Because he was escorted by military guards and this sort of thing -- his body was escorted.

Q. So what happened (unclear)?

A. Well, then they took him outside of the shrine, and they buried him in another locale.

Q. That's very interesting. So that's when he talks about the question of the concept of velayat, which was later on picked up by ...

A. Well, it was in Shi'ite Islam for a long time, but anyway he addressed that issue, and he addressed it quite well. Because I used to sit with him and discuss, although he never

ZARGHAMEE-1

considered me really high up on the understandings or standards of basic philosophic principles of Shi'a. But he tried to explain certain things to me.

I remember seeing Ayatollah Musavi Ardabili there, and he was talking to him. He didn't have a high regard for him as somebody who understands principles of Islam.

Q. What was he known as?

A. He was known as General Zarghamee.

Q. I thought he might have some religious title.

A. No. No.

Q. Would you please describe about your mother and her family background.

A. Well, my mother, again, comes from sort of an average family, but her father was in the military, but it's not a military family. It was just her father was in the military, but her parents got divorced when she was a kid, anyway. And then she married my father when she was 19 -- or 17 to 19, I don't recall which one.

ZARGHAMEE-1

And anyway, she's hard-working, and she suffered a lot. She doesn't have a very high education -- I think they went to 7th, 8th, 9th grade or something like that.

Q. When you say she suffered, was this ...?

A. The family relationships, especially in my grandfather's house, there were so many people. It was my grandfather's family, our family, my uncle's family, all of us were living under one big umbrella. Sort of several houses interconnected together and this sort of thing. I know that we had a lot of financial problems, but anyway that was

Emotionally, psychologically and financially there was hard to live in Iran of that time.

Q. Was she being dominated by the in-laws and the rest of the extended family?

A. Oh, yes. I think that sort of problem usually existed. But anyway, she was more of the dominating kind, rather than being dominated. But, anyway, whether you are dominating or being dominated, you're going to suffer in the extended family structure.

ZARGHAMEE-1

Q. How many siblings do you have? How many sisters and brothers?

A. Oh, I have two sisters only.

Q. You're the only son?

A. I am the only son.

Q. Are you the oldest?

A. Yes, I am the oldest.

Q. Where were you born?

A. I was born in Esfahan, exactly during the Second World War, because my parents went to Esfahan for a short time when the capital was transferred for a few days from Tehran to Esfahan. And I was born there upon arrival, and they got back to Tehran a few days later.

Q. What is the date of your birth?

A. September 1, 1941.

Q. I would like to ask you to describe a little detail of

your life, about your childhood and upbringing, that is yterz-e tarbiyat <upbringing>. You know, where you went to school, and high school

A. Yes. I went to the local.... I used to live in Jaleh Intersection, and I went to the local public school there. And then, until 9th grade -- end of the 9th grade -- I was attending the local schools in the neighborhood, whether it was primary school or secondary school. My 10th, 11th and 12th grade I went to Alborz High School.

My father wasn't very restrict {strict}, and my mother was not very restrict {strict}. In fact, there was ... I mean, my father, if he was not in the military, you would never be able to identify him as a military person, because he never acted as a domineering man. Relatively it was ... sort of a relaxed atmosphere. There was no special force {unclear} to bring me up in a special way or anything. In fact, nobody noticed that children existed.

I was very studious, and I was usually trying to be the best student in the class. I sometimes succeeded, not always. I had good competition.

Q. Were you shagard-e avval <honor student>?

A. Well, many times I became shagerd-e avval. When, I went to Alborz, then I became <Honor Student of Tehran in mathematics>, and then there was some, another competition, and I became <Second Honor Student in Iran>. I was ... at Alborz I really got interested in riyezi <math>, and if I wasn't from a developing country or if I had some financial stature, family-wise, I would have probably gone into pure mathematics and studied pure mathematics at college. But, somehow, coming up from a

I saw my father and the financial problems that he had, and this sort of thing, that I never wanted to become a military person. I loved mathematics so much ... that was out of the question. So, I went into engineering, and I came to America. I studied at Georgia Tech. I got my B.A. in Civil Engineering there in 1962. Then I went to University of Illinois, and I got my master's and Ph.D in, again, Structural Engineering, in 19-- -- I got my Ph.D. in 1965.

Then I came to this company in 1965, and I started working for them. At the same time, since I was always interested in mathematics, I went to MIT, and I got a Master's in mathematics, in pure mathematics, from MIT in 1968. During these three years I was working full-time here also. So in 1968 I went back to Iran and started teaching at Aryamehr University of Technology.

Q. You must have been very young.

A. Young. When I finished high school, it was 1959. When I finished the BS, my Bachelor of Civil Engineering it was 1962. That took me three years. And three years later I got my Ph.D. And when I was working I was used to working full-time and studying full-time.

When I went to study mathematics I didn't have much mathematics background. I never went to undergraduate mathematics, I am going to graduate mathematics, and getting the MS in one year, at the same time I was working, required a lot of work. But I wasn't afraid of working. And during that time I also published 6 or 7 articles. I was very

Q. On what?

A. Well, the articles I published in 1965 to 1968, I was working on antennas. I published it, actually, not in I published some articles in structural engineering, primarily on shell theory and vibration. But then I went into electrical engineering, and I published a couple of articles in electrical engineering on antenna performance. Then I did some other work that was published in American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

When I finished my MS and I went to Iran, I started ... I mean in Iran I was teaching a few courses. Teaching -- I really enjoy teaching. And then I started doing research in mathematics, and I published a series of articles in mathematics. A year after I got to Iran, I was promoted to Associate Professorship, and then four years later, I became a Full Professor. I was one of the first Full Professors of Aryamehr University of Technology.

Q. You started teaching there? From the beginning?

A. Yeah, I started teaching. Here I was doing primarily design work and research and development work. But in Aryamehr University I started teaching. I taught mathematics, operation research, and numerical methods and this sort of thing.

But my research was primarily in areas that I tried to establish a mathematical foundation for some of the engineering concepts. I mean, it was very interesting. And it was work that I could do easily in Iran, because mathematics you don't need I knew engineering fairly well, and I knew mathematics, and I could marry the two fields and work in Iran. Because in technical areas, you had to be in continuous contact with the field. In sort of

theoretical areas, maybe you can work in Iran.

Anyway, I did a lot of work in the first few years in Iran. And I published a number of papers. One of the papers won an award. Anyway, until I became involved with what I call the design and construction of the Aryamehr University of Technology in Esfahan. That was in 1971, I think. That was three years afterward. I started the ...

There was a mandate at the beginning that Aryamehr University should be built in Esfahan. Nobody took it very seriously. First of all, Mojtehedī, who built Aryamehr University of Technology thought that the university can't be built anywhere other than Tehran because it's not going to be able to have such good faculty, and if you don't have good faculty you don't have good students. And he was right. You couldn't have built a good university outside of Tehran.

If anybody returned at that time to Iran, it was primarily because he wanted to be close to his family. And most of the people came from Tehran, who had opportunity at that time to come to America, get a Ph.D., this sort of thing.

But somehow Mr. Amouzegar from the beginning was pushing for decentralization, and he said that ... One day I remember Reza Amin was Chancellor of the university, and he called me.

ZARGHAMEE-1

And he said that would I like to be involved with the design, essentially design and building of this whole university. And I said, "Yes, if it would be an independent university. I don't have to take these people, and take" He said yes. Well, he didn't say yes, he said he had to go to His Majesty, and

Anyway, he came back, and, yeah, it's independent. And so I started to design that university from scratch, from the philosophy ... starting with the philosophy of education, going all the way to the physical, and then going and training the faculty and this sort of thing. And I did that, and it took me from 1971 until 1977, that the doors were opened and the first students went in.

But somehow, around 1976-77, I found out that it wasn't that clear that this university would be totally independent from the Aryamehr University in Tehran. And there was a big issue, even up through the revolution time whether Aryamehr University should go or shouldn't go to Esfahan. But it was built, designed and built, as an independent university. And that was, I think, my ...

I loved that project, and I think I put everything I had into that. And I built that university until in 1977 it was open, and started student enrolment. I can talk about that in

ZARGHAMEE-1

greater detail if you want to.

Q. I would like to. But let me just ask for one clarification. When you say Aryamehr at Esfahan to be independent, did you mean to have two Aryamehrs or do you mean to have the Aryamehr in Tehran transplanted?

A. No, no, no. I wanted independent in the sense that you would not transplant a university from Tehran to Esfahan.

Q. So you would have one Aryamehr in Tehran ...

A. You would have a double-campus system, like ... But they are independent in the sense that....I mean, the California system, for example, you have different campuses. You don't have to build, for example, a campus at this location, and then transplant whole that university there.

Because Mr. Amouzegar was very much interested in decentralization, he permitted small colleges and the sort of thing that would have attracted thousands of students to be built in Tehran, but And many other things ... Tehran was growing like mad, but somehow he was under the impression that the university must be transplanted, I mean, must be moved from Tehran to Esfahan.

ZARGHAMEE-1

I was of the opinion that it would be a completely independent university. It would be a second ... University of Aryamehr in Tehran and University of Aryamehr in Esfahan would be ... under one umbrella like ... but would have different campuses. There are many universities even in Massachusetts that have multiple campuses, like the University of Massachusetts, which has Amherst, Worcester and Boston campuses.

Q. Why ... I mean, you said that first they said it's OK, you could have it independent. And then, later on, somehow they seemed to have changed their minds.

A. When somebody goes to His Majesty and gets permission, he describes the situation and he agrees. What he has to do immediately after that is to write a letter to the office of His Majesty and get approval, written, that this has happened. It is not well-known to others what happened. I mean, if the Shah doesn't.... Nobody can ask the Shah, "Do you remember you said such and....?"

I don't know really whether at the time when Reza Amin told me that he had his understanding of what I was asking was exactly what he was conveying in the answer to me. It's possible that he may have misunderstood. He may not have conveyed the same thing I had in mind by "independent."

Because, later on, when I was Chancellor of Aryamehr University, they told me that, "Oh, yes, Aryamehr University in Tehran can continue to exist, but not ... It can continue to exist as another form of a university that would train another type of graduates." They didn't want They wanted more practical people to be trained in Tehran and more sophisticated engineers in Esfahan.

Q. So, what is the problem there?

A. Well, the point is this, that you cannot decide on a day that you are going to change the attitude of a university. Today you are going to make practical ... I mean, what happens to these guys who are professors? Are they supposed to all move to Esfahan?

Well, anyway, somehow the point of moving of the Aryamehr University from Tehran to Esfahan became a political issue. And in the year before the revolution it was probably a source of dissent among the faculty at Aryamehr University. And it resulted in strikes of faculty, continuous strikes. And then it led to ... The government of Mr. Amouzegar discontinued the salaries of the professors. And then the students were on strike. (unclear)

ZARGHAMEE-1

If you ask some of professors of Aryamehr University, they'd say that this issue contributed more than anything else to the revolution.

Q. This is in fact very interesting because one of the issues involved here for us is to know how the university system worked in the totality.

A. Well, Aryamehr University was somewhat different. Aryamehr University was a university that was named after the Shah. The head of Pahlavi University and the head of Aryamehr University and the head of Tehran University had direct access to the Shah. Well, the head of Tehran University was occupied by a highly influential man, usually. And he always had access to the Shah. Regardless of whether there was something called Minister of Higher Education or not. By his personality the guy would have access to the Shah.

The head of Aryamehr University and Pahlavi University ...

The heads of Aryamehr and Pahlavi Universities had access to the Shah because the Shah really loved these two universities. He was involved with the development of these two universities. He would make decisions that were

ZARGHAMEE-1

requested by the Chancellor. He would never want to see the head of Aryamehr University, but if the head of Aryamehr University wanted to see him, he would give him an audience.

At the time I was there, the reasons why I had to see the Shah (for example, I was Chancellor) or the reasons I know some of the previous Chancellors had to see the Shah were these sorts of problems that were outside of your control.

Somebody on the Board of Trustees being influenced by the general policies of the government at the time would say that, OK, we have to go to ... I mean, you have to move the university to Esfahan. That's where you are. That's why you were given the right to give high salaries.

Aryamehr University could give much higher salaries to the faculty than Tehran University, not because of the fact that it was Aryamehr University, because they said that this is a university that's supposed to be in Esfahan. It's temporarily here. So we give the higher salaries that are associated with out-of ... (in a bad climate or remote from the capital city). We permit them to give higher salaries, like the University of Pahlavi, because they were away from the capital.

Now, in the minds of the bureaucracy, they had all sorts of

explanations why the university should move. The professors didn't know why they were getting a high salary, and they couldn't live with a lower salary in Tehran, anyway. So, the fact that they had to move, or change, or this sort of thing, was always a problem. And there were antagonists, especially near the end, that really utilized this dissent amongst the professors to sort of manipulate them in the way that they wanted.

Q. The original plan was to move some of the professors to Esfahan ...?

A. The original plan was that the Aryamehr University is going to be built in Esfahan. And that was why they got the permission to give higher salaries. What Mojtehedī did, he said that if I build the university in Tehran, nobody can move it to Esfahan.

So, he started ... He didn't like the idea, although the idea was dictated by Mr. Amouzegar, at that time a celebrated minister in the Board of Trustees. And also then even Hoveida, the Prime Minister, who was also a member of the Board of Trustees, he apparently went and talked to His Majesty about it and backed it up even. The Shah was sold on the idea that the university should be built in Esfahan. And he was always pressing that from the beginning.

Mojtehedî managed not to do anything about it, and say that we need the land and architect ... He dragged his feet. Professor Reza was the second Chancellor of Aryamehr University. He really didn't get that much chance to get involved, although he initiated some activity about getting the piece of land. Finally, at the time of Reza Amin, the land was obtained.

The land was enormous, it was 17 million square meters of land, which was a few kilometers, I mean about ... From this side to the other side was 7 or 8 kilometers. It was in a beautiful place. And then Dr. Amin hired Arthur D. Little to come up with a functional master-plan.

All of these studies were really done by chancellors who were not committed to move to Esfahan. That would have sort of delayed the issue long enough until Well, each one of them knew that it's only a matter of two or three years, and they had enough headaches. They didn't want this big headache of going to the faculty to say that you have to move there when there was nothing there to move to.

So I came on board. And it was well-known among the faculty that the university had to move someday. But it was also a fact that if they had organized themselves properly, maybe

ZARGHAMEE-1

they didn't have to move. Anyway, when I got on board, the question I raised was this: if I want to build a university from scratch, I have so much freedom to start with a new philosophy, a new concept. And I didn't want to move everybody. You're confining yourself so much to the forms and to the ideas that were developed here, rather than the new ideas that you want to implement. So I said, "Can this exist and that exist simultaneously?" And the answer at that time was "Yes."

Then when I became Chancellor, a lot of things had happened in the interim. One was that the student body of Aryamehr University had received a lot of political orientation. In fact, it was a highly active group of students amongst all the -- maybe the highest. Both the Communists and the Islamic Marxists, the Mojahedin or whatever. I don't want to use these names because what existed at that time is different from what transpired through time later on.

Anyway, Mojahedin and Fada'iyan, or the Marxists and the Islamic Marxists, or whatever, they were both highly active at Aryamehr University. And then, I think the regime also didn't want that to persist, and they were looking for all means of disintegrating that "nest of activity."

By 1977, not only the students were highly politicized, but

ZARGHAMEE-1

also the faculty now was active because the seed of dissent had been implanted amongst the faculty. And the government wasn't helping much either, especially at the time of Amouzegar, when there was no minister of higher education. There was no body to make a decision.

At that time I was gone from the university. I was at that time Managing Director of the National Iranian Copper Industry. The man who succeeded me, he had a hard time getting proper cooperation from the government.

Q. If we could go back just a little bit -- when you were proposing the idea, or you were working on your idea of starting a new university in Esfahan, did the university have public forums whereby you could present your ideas to the students or to other faculty members?

A. No. No. The structure of the university ... the structure of decision-making of the university was something like this: There was His Majesty. You would never raise a problem to His Majesty unless it was a cumbersome problem that could not be solved otherwise. There were too many factors. You had to make a decision. There were too many factors, too many opposing views and contradiction of expressed policies with your intentions, and this sort of thing -- like the example that I said.

Or, there were things that the Shah had instituted. For example, I had to go once -- I mean, at one of my audiences I talked to the Shah about Rastakhiz Party. He expected that suddenly everybody, all the kanoun <centers> would flourish and mushroom, and the students would coalesce around these kanoun <centers>, and he would have a party of his own rather than leaving the entire student body to the two centers of attraction, which were Mojahedin and Fada'iyan. That didn't take place.

He asked me, "What have you done concerning Rastakhiz Party?" I said, "Nothing." He said, "What do you mean, nothing?" I said, "Well, because this is a matter of fighting a I mean, if you want to establish a party, you must have political thought. You must have a philosophy. You can't say, 'The Shah said it,' and expect all the students to jump." He said, "What do we need?" And he said, "Well, if you want to fight an idea, you have to develop an idea."

Q. Did you actually (unclear)?

A. And he said, "Well" And then he took it from here on and said he must have a dialectic. And then he issued that order, the next day (or a couple of days afterwards) to the government that you have to write the philosophy of the

ZARGHAMEE-1

Rastakhiz Party based on dialectic principles, and this sort of thing.

But unless there were issues that would be a headache for the Chancellor, he would never raise it with His Majesty. It was the headache-issues that would go to him.

Other than those issues, the rest of the operation of the university was done essentially by the Chancellor. He was in charge of the university, and he was working essentially with two bodies. One is called Hay'at-e Omana, or Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees had to make all the ... had to give approval to all decisions that had financial implications.

And then the second one was Shoray-e Daneshgah, or University Council. The University Council had to approve, or actually It had to approve, that was the body that was making decisions. In fact, the Chancellor of the university had no authority other than Well, I don't know whether he had veto-power or not. I don't believe he had veto-power. But all the academic decisions were going essentially through the University Council.

When I became in charge of the new university, which was Aryanehr University of Esfahan, I was working under the

ZARGHAMEE-1

direction of the Chancellor, and my power was derived from his authority. So he couldn't have committed anything other than ... outside of the rules and regulations that were set forth by Hay'at-e Omana <Board of Trustees>.

We were not at all confined by what I called regulations governing the operation of government-owned activities. Although the money was coming primarily from the government. Although I have to explain that Aryamehr University was a private, and at the beginning it was intended to operate as a private institution. In fact, Mojtehedī went around and collected the money, and did not get much from the government.

Then, later on, more and more there was reliance on government funds. Until lately, most of the money was coming from the government solely. There was some contribution which was made by the National Iranian Oil Company, which came to the general funds of Aryamehr University. But that was also remnants of the activity that Mojtehedī started to make a private institution, and not be so much under the pawa of the government.

Q. So what changed this?

A. Well, the fact that when you start a university you don't

ZA: GHAMEE-1

need much money. As the university grows, it needs an operating budget of 100 million toman a year. And you can't get 100 million toman a year from private sources. But maybe 5 or 10 million toman you could get. That's what he did.

In the first two years he got ... In the first year, I think he got 90% of his operating budget from people. He just went around and collected the money. In fact, he was told to start a university in 1965 or 66. He was told to start a university. The same year he started the university.

I mean, if he wanted to write a budget and give it to the government, and this and that, it would have taken through two or three years just to get the funds.

But he immediately started the university. He actually borrowed the place; he got money and contributions from here and there; he asked contractors that he knew to come and build something. And he built what is known as suleh. Suleh is a sort of industrial frame that you put up. And then he spent very little money to build the university in a matter of a few months. I mean, that let the university start operations.

And he did a beautiful job. In six months the university started. Once a university starts, you can not stop it. It's ... Well, Khomeini has proved otherwise. Usually you

ZARGHAMEE-1

couldn't. So that's what happened.

Anyway, we are jumping all over the place, in the time domain at least. But the subject is the same.

Q. Please feel free to just say whatever you like (unclear).

A. Anyway, this ... So when I became in charge of Aryamehr University in Esfahan, I tried to build a new university and make it independent in the sense that I would not be constrained by the regulations of the council from the academic point of view. I had the same financial regulations to observe, because the Chancellor of the university was bound by those finan ... I mean, the regulations and transactions and contracts, and this sort of thing.

But academically I didn't want to go to the University Council. The reason is this: that usually whenever you go to the University Council, you found First of all, there were so many issues in front of the University Council of an emerging university, in a society that didn't have a tradition of an educational system at all compatible with what was going on at that time.

Previous to Aryamehr University, Esfahan University, Shiraz, Tehran, etc. was primarily modelled after the French system.

ZARGHAMEE-1

And right around 1966-67, when Aryamehr University started functioning, what they called the Educational Revolution of the Shah started. And two universities, which were Pahlavi University and Aryamehr University were essentially manned by American-trained people. It was much easier for them to understand and implement a system which was compatible to the Carnegie credit system in this country. It wasn't so easy at Tehran University, etc.

But nevertheless, even at Aryamehr University, there were a lot of French and German and British-educated people, who had different concepts. And Shoray-e Daneshgah, or University Council of the university, was a place to sit down and argue things out. Endless hours, days from morning till night, you were discussing what should be the structure of the program, what should be the content, what should be the organization, and this sort of thing.

How should the faculty be promoted? Aryamehr University was the only university I know of that completely the promotion of the faculty was in the hands of the faculty and students. Nobody, neither from the higher echelons in the ministry, or even the Chancellor, had much to say about the promotion of faculty. This division of powers and authorities was well-done in Aryamehr University.

ZARGHAMEE-1

Later on, of course, a problem developed. The problem stemmed from the fact that an informal organization started taking shape at Aryamehr University, which was essentially a sort of union for faculty. And that Well, the country wasn't coped to deal with unions.

Q. You mean this was actually an official union, or ...?

A. I don't know what is official. Official means that it is officially registered with SAVAK? It wasn't official, or maybe it was, I don't know what it was. It was a struggle on the part of a certain number of faculty to gain authority. And what they had was essentially They started as something called Komiteh-e Refah <Committee for Welfare>, which is to provide for refah <welfare> of professors, essentially. Komiteh-e Refah first addressed the issues of the salary is not enough, and you have to get high promotions, and

Every year they did a sort of symbolic strike or protest of some form. And they got a 10%, 20%, 25% raise. The raise was natural because it was in the years there was tremendous inflation in Iran.

Then after a little while, they became much more interested in other powers.

Q. Like political powers, you mean?

A. Well, I don't know what is Political power is political. It's my definition. It's not By political, I don't mean associated with established parties, or lines of thought. It was essentially to get involved in ... What they did was this: they selected and ran their people for certain offices, which was academic, etc.etc.

And so, instead of getting good people selected, essentially they were people who had special commitments. Because Aryamehr University was primarily governed by officials who were selected by the faculty, essentially. First of all, they had the chairmen of the departments, instead of being people of educational stature -- I'm talking about people of academic stature -- they became people who were loyal to Komiteh-e Refah.

Then, you found out that whatever you had to deal with, like promotion, like various other things, you had people from Komiteh-e Refah who were infiltrating everywhere.

Then there was a sort of an internal struggle between the Chancellors of the university and the Komiteh-e Refah in order to gain power enough to run the university. And also,

ZARGHAMEE-1

a lot of excellent academicians, they became also anti-Komiteh-e Refah. That means you had essentially three poles. One was Komiteh-e Refah, which were a large number of people who came from Germany, and who couldn't publish, and this sort of thing. Some of the people from Germany did excellent work, but some of the others were not so easy in writing a paper. It wasn't easy for them to write a paper and publish it. So they coalesced around Komiteh-e Refah.

Academicians, good researchers, good teachers, etc. they didn't like Komiteh-e Refah. And essentially the governing people had another pole. Now, at times, academicians and governing people, they got together. But it had to do with how much if the pressure from the government on a special issue was too much, like Rastakhiz and this sort of thing, then they would break up. But essentially there were three poles at that time.

Q. It's interesting you identified the Komiteh-e Refah with people who primarily come from other countries (unclear).

A. The point is this: the Komiteh-e Refah was a source of power. It was an informal power struggle, and it was a source of power. And there was a lot of dissent in the university because the promotion regulations that we ourselves wrote and we ourselves executed were too stringent

ZARGHAMEE-1

for us to accept.

We have said that if you want to become an Associate Professor, for example, you have to initiate a thought, perform the research, and publish it in this country (in Iran, I mean). Well, many people didn't. And then they said, "Hey, I'm here seven or eight years! I'm not promoted to Associate Professorship. I have a paper." We said, "Yeah, but this paper was written on the same subject as your thesis. You took your thesis and changed it a little bit. It's not a new idea that you went after."

And then they were mad. The Komiteh-e Refah essentially was promoting more politically-oriented people rather than ... I mean, by friendship they would get the people in -- a sort of closed-door. But anyway, I think any When a country starts on the path of unionization, these are usual problems. To find ... people ... who sought something and they become ... they take it to an extreme and their vested interest becomes very important to them.

But it is a part of the life of Iran that ... It's amazing that SAVAK was never very much against this union formation. Although it was some None of the Chancellors of the universities were pressed by SAVAK to stop or do something or But it just I don't know SAVAK was never

ZARGHAMEE-1

During my time, SAVAK was never interested in the university, period.

Q. Really? Not at all? (unclear)

A. Nobody came to me. Nobody talked to me. Whatever they wanted to do, I think they would have done it anyway. I mean, there were cases that they captured a student, but I even didn't know. I read it in the paper, for example. This was no a priori knowledge. There was no interaction with the university in the way the Chancellor would know.

But I remember before, from what was told to me by other previous chancellors, they had meetings, regular meetings, with SAVAK agents present, or this sort of thing. But at the time I was there, which was after 1975 I became chancellor, there was none of these sort of In fact, I didn't know SAVAK existed. I could have not known SAVAK existed; I knew it existed.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LADJEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DUBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 2, 1985
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA
INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI
TAPE NO.: 2
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 02

AMIN, MOHAMMAD-REZA

ARYANEHR TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

MILITARY

MOJAHEDIN-E KHALQ, SAZMAN

SADETI, FARVIZ

SAVAK

SHAH, STUDENTS AND THE

STUDENT PROTESTS & ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS

02

ZARGHAMEE-2

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghamee

Date: February 2, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape no.: 2

Q. Please go ahead.

A. OK. We were discussing the informal organization that developed in Aryamehr University. It's very interesting that, as a result of this informal organization, many of the strict laws of Aryamehr University, which happened to be very strict at the time, were broken because there wasn't that much power left with the chancellorship. One of them was the full-time. I mean, when Aryamehr University was formed, it was mandatory that everybody be full-time. And if you worked outside, you had to get a special permit from your department and from the chancellor of the university.

Well, since, first of all, this disintegration of power that happened. Now, whether it was politically oriented by the people who fabricated Komiteh-e Refah <Committee for Welfare>

ZARGHAMEE-2

or not, is not well-known to me. But I would not be amazed if that was the design of a certain number of people, especially who went to Germany and who were politically motivated, and they thought that would be a very easy way of gaining power. Whether they did it for the heck of it, or whether it was politically oriented in the sense that there was anti-government sentiments in it, I wouldn't know.

I wouldn't The people who were one of the heads of Komiteh-e Refah happened to be Houshang Sabeti, whose brother was Parviz Sabeti, the head of the Internal Affairs of SAVAK. So I don't know what was going on. I didn't know whether they nominated Houshang Sabeti as a cover, or whether this had both a blessing from East and West. I don't know ...

Q. International problems at the university....

A. But anyway, the struggle for power at Aryamehr University was a very interesting phenomenon. And I think it needs detailed study in the future.

Now, there's one thing I wanted to say. You said that your tapes were stolen. I remember at Aryamehr University we started a research which was on coding/decoding devices. We formed a laboratory which was called Electronics Research Lab. And we developed an instrument that could decode all

ZARGHAMEE-2

the vocal coded things. Now, I have to tell you that America by law can not sell any coding/decoding devices outside of America. He cannot sell it because these are banned by the Acts of Congress.

Q. I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean by "vocal device."

A. Well, telephone, for example. You have a telephone, you're talking to somebody, and then this goes through a scrambler of some sort and becomes coded. When you listen to it between the two terminals, it is gibberish. And then it goes through a decoding device.

Now, the coding devices and decoding devices that Iran had were very mundane, elementary kinds that Iran had bought from Germany. One of them was on the telephone of the Shah. The Prime Minister had one of them. The heads of the armed forces had one. SAVAK had, probably, and SAVAK people. Army personnel in the field, whatever they use is coded.

Q. Nobody else could decode it. Nobody else could understand. (unclear)

A. The purpose is to And if you are Any field activity, in fact, would require a telephone or wireless type

ZARGHAMEE-2

of ... anyway, some sort of vocal communication. Nowadays they don't Hard copies. I mean the guy who's in the field will say, "Go forward!" I mean, somebody has to say to somebody else, "Go forward!" This passes through a coding/decoding device.

Anyway, at Aryamehr University we worked on a very sophisticated coding/decoding device, and as a by-product of that, we developed equipment that breaks all the codes. You can see now the importance of that.

Anyway we called Edareh-e Dovvom <Second Department> in the army, and said, "Send us (this was done with the blessing of the military, incidentally, the final parts), give us a tape of your coded things, and we'll see what happens." So, they made a tape. They read through a coder something, and they gave it to us. And we broke it and made a tape. The coded stuff was here and we had decoded it here.

So the guy who did this brought the equipment to my room and said that with a tape-recorder I want to show you what we have done. And then he said, "At the beginning of this tape you will see a part of Sa'adi which the guy read in coded form, and after that is the decoded form." I said, "Well, how did you do it?" He said, "I have done this with our equipment that we have developed at the university, and I

ZARGHAMEE-2

have put it in the safe and locked it." (This whole lab was off-limits, I mean it was a restricted area. It was on the campus, but you couldn't get to it. Well-guarded, and had a big safe.)

"And I have left it in the safe last night, and I brought it here this morning to show it to you." So, OK. He turned it on. And it started. It was music! And he was shocked. And later on I found out that the military had swapped the tape.

Q. That's amazing.

A. So the only bother that they have they're in the habit of swapping tapes.

Q. Coding and decoding and swapping tapes.

A. Yes.

Q. I'd like to come back to this whole university system, and your position as the chancellor and <unclear> tried to develop some program for the university. But before that, I'd like to ask a few more questions. If we may go back to the beginning of the interview, I'm still interested in the circumstances which led you to choose the career which you have chosen.

You said something about your father not being strict, and you yourself being very studious. Would you like to comment on that? In a way, what I'm asking is for you to describe in as much detail as you can give me the circumstances that led you to choose the particular career.

A. I was ... the career. You mean become an engineer or go and get involved with?

Q. Yes, all of them. You know.

A. Well... Why I became an engineer was because I was very much interested in mathematics, and I didn't go after mathematics because the job opportunities for a guy who was mathematically prone, was a mathematician, were extremely limited in Iran at that time. So I went after engineering instead. This was ... I was ... I never liked very much military I mean the colors weren't there.

Q. Yes, this is <?>.

A. It's not that First of all, you have to recognize that I left Iran in 1959. If you look back at the ten or twenty years, or the.... I was 17 years old ... forget about the first 6 years 12 years. This is past time My

ZARGHAMEE-2

recollections span a period of time before Mossadegh, through Mossadegh, after Mossadegh. And the military wasn't a very colorful thing for me.

First of all, my grandfather, after the Second World War he was retired at the age of 56. He was sitting home. There were lots of people who used to come to our home and visit him, but he didn't have military callers anymore. And my father was well, the color wasn't there, anyway.

Q. I'm sorry, I'd like to ask you this question because you mentioned that before. You said it wasn't financially exciting; your grandfather, your father didn't make much money. But, that's my question, was it basically financial? When you say it didn't have "color", what do you mean? I'd like to <unclear>.

A. If you looked at the life of a...

Q. What wasn't attractive to you?

A. ... life of a general who is ... Let's take a general who is living much later in time, at the time that, for example, in the early 1970s or mid-1970s, and was living essentially not on staff position jobs, which are primarily in Tehran, but on line position jobs, which are primarily outside of

ZARGHAMEE-2

Tehran. What you find out is this: that you're a commander of some lashkar <army division> or something, and the biggest house on the premises is yours, and you see a lot of respect because the hierarchy ... the pyramidal structure of the army and the hierarchy. You will see, as the son of a general, a lot of salutes and this sort of thing. And special privileges, etcetera.

Well, living in Tehran, coming essentially from a ... My father was chancellor of the military university at that time -- when I left Iran. And he was Well, they used to call it Commander of the Military University. Military University -- Daneshgah-e Nezami. I'm living in Tehran, and essentially that was a staff position, it wasn't a line position, although there is lots of line in it. But the character of my father wasn't like that. You don't see the colors. There is no big ceremony and you as the son or something sitting there, enjoying front-row seats or this sort of thing.

Q. So you mean there wasn't much pomp.

A. That's right, not much pomp, at that time, at least.

Anyway, I came to engineering for these reasons. And I stayed in engineering. I went back to mathematics to the extent that I could.

ZARGHAMEE-2

Q. Please begin with your first position, and end with your most recent <position> in Iran. Go into the chronology <unclear>.

A. These are the exact titles that I held. First I was Mo'aleme Daneshgah-e San'atiy-e Aryamehr <Teacher of the Technical University of Aryamehr>, and this is called "Instructor."

Q. So you were hired as an instructor?

A. No, it's not mo'alem <teacher>. Mo'alem is not an instructor, actually. What Mojtabedi did, he said, "I will not give titles until there is enough university to give titles." So he had essentially one title for everybody, and he called them mo'alem. And then, this was the first year, then I became Associate Professor.

And then I became -- this is in 1969 I became Associate Professor -- in 1970 I became vice-chairman of the Math Department. There were only three of us teaching at that time in the Math Department -- three Ph.D.s -- of course there were

Q. All from the U.S.?

ZARGHAMEE-2

A. Yes. One of us was chairman, one was vice-chairman. Then in 1971 I became in charge of the -- I became what is called Director of the Office of Planning and Development. In 1972 I became Vice-Chancellor of the university in charge of Research and Development. Planning, research and development. There were three areas under my supervision. In 1973 I became Full Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science. I forgot something: in 1970 I became the coordinator of the first graduate program in Computer Science.

Q. I'm sorry, coordinator of?

A. Of the graduate program in Computer Science.

In 1974, I became Gha'em Magham-e Ra'is-e Daneshgah <Acting Chancellor of the university>. I don't know what it is in English. Gha'em Magham-e Niyabat-e Toliyat-e Ozmay-e Daneshgah-e San'atiy-e Aryamehr. Which is something like the ... it was Gha'em Magham-e Niyabat-e Toliyat-e Ozma, and Director of the Esfahan Project, we called it, or the Esfahan Campus Project. In 1975 I became Chancellor of Aryamehr University of Technology. In 1977 I became the Managing Director of the National Iranian Copper Industry.

ZARGHAMEE-2

Q. Now, would you please describe the responsibilities associated with each position.

A. OK. Except for teaching positions, that have well-defined responsibilities in teaching and research, the first position that I had in Iran other than a teaching and research position was Vice-Chancellor of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. I was sort of more in charge of the students, and I was trying to understand their needs, problems, and these sorts of things, and accomodate them. If they had a problem they used to come to me to see if they could

Q. <unclear>

A. There was some element of counseling, but every professor was a counsellor, essentially. We had a department in <?> and there weren't that many people around as faculty. I have to tell that the Math Department of Aryamehr University developed from three of us, which was Dr. Anvari, Dr. Mehri, and myself, to the, I would say, the best department amongst mathematics and sciences in the country. It has ... even now after the revolution, I think there are powerful people there, and they are engaged in active research at this time. Which is quite interesting.

But it started with three of us. There was Dr. Navaddat who also was primarily in Computer Science at that time. And we were getting help from a large number of other faculty who had an interest in mathematics. But later on, with time it developed into a beautiful Math department. I was primarily in the applied ... because of my engineering background and this sort of thing, I was more interested in some subjects: in analysis and application. But there were other people who were in other areas of mathematics.

This was in 1969, and it lasted for two or three years. Then I became in charge of coordinating the graduate program.

This was the first graduate program that was instituted in Iran. It was the first in the sciences and mathematics and engineering. It had to do with a computer science program, which we took people of various backgrounds and put them into a graduate program, and gave them a Master of Science in Computer Science and Application. That's what we called it.

Then I became head or director of the Office of Planning and Development. I was primarily responsible for all the evaluation and planning and development of the University of Aryamehr. And this lasted from 1971, I think that I became responsible for that, all the way until I left Aryamehr University in 1977, although the position changed. It was

ZARGHAMEE-2

essentially the same thing, it was just that the job grew larger.

I mean, I became first director of the Office of Planning and Development. I was primarily responsible for academic planning and this sort of thing in Tehran. And at the same time I was carrying the ball for Esfahan. So I was in ... Many of the academic planning issues, I was forming the committees, ad hoc committees, etc., to study them and make recommendations and this sort of thing.

Research -- I started the Office of Research, industrial liaison with the outside, and also research inside, which was university research. That also developed into It became later on ... had its own vice-chancellor which was in charge of each one of them separately.

Then Esfahan grew larger and larger and larger until I became, in 1974, I became Gha'em Magham; I had all the authority, and I didn't have to confer with the chancellor in order to do whatever I wanted. I had all the authority of the chancellor of the university.

Q. How much decision-making power does a chancellor have?

A. The chancellor has a lot of First of all, as I said,

if you look at the university, and look at the types of decisions that are to be made, and categorize them in three groups. One is academic, two is financial or financially related, and three is administrative. Academically, he had very general powers. He had no authority in the day-to-day operation of a course. He had no power in the operation of a department unless it was in the form of certain specific decisions in which he had been given authority by the constitution of the university.

In administrative, he had all the power. In financial, he had all the power within the framework of approved regulations. But administratively he was autonomous -- he made his own laws. I mean, the laws -- I appointed a bunch of people, they made a regulation, and if I approved it, as the chancellor, it would become I didn't have to take it elsewhere.

However, the general by-laws, very general, like, for example, anything that would affect financial transactions or personnel, general personnel, benefits and things like that, had to get the approval of Hay'at-e Omana (Board of Trustees).

If a faculty member wanted to go abroad to a conference, this sort of thing, essentially the power was vested in the

ZARGHAMEE-2

chancellor to approve or disapprove because it had financial connotations. But so long as the faculty member was teaching, and this sort of thing, ...

He was also a voting member of the university council. So he had academic power in the sense that he was the chairman, and voting power in the academic council.

In research he had all the power, because research meant money and administration. And all the power was vested in the chancellor.

In planning he had all the power. That means he didn't need to go anywhere to open a new area, but usually he would take it to Hay'at-e Omana, which is the Board of Trustees. And he would also have to get the program of that department, the new department, approved by the University Council.

So far as content of courses was concerned, I think -- starting from the smallest element, content of courses -- he had no power. From what courses to be taught, he had essentially very little power. From what program, he had a lot of power, because he could initiate programs and get the approval of Hay'at-e Omana, the Shah, the ministry, etc., etc. -- whatever he had to do.

ZARGHAMEE-2

Q. Could he eliminate programs, too, if he wanted to?

A. No, because the total enrollment in every program had to get the approval of the University Council. He couldn't eliminate a program, but he could recommend a smaller size, with reason, of course. But the University Council had to approve the number of students who would get enrolled in each area.

Then he had very limited power in promotions, in the sense that, first of all, he was a voting member of the University Council, and he had to approve every promotion. As a veto power. I think, when I look back, he had veto power. It was rarely exercised.

Other than these, he had

In sponsoring research, etc., he had total power, although he had vested his power to the Vice-Chancellor in charge of research, and essentially various committees that were given -- I mean, it would operate without him. But he had the power.

Q. Are you talking mostly theoretically or actually?

A. No, this is theoretical. What I am saying is this is

ZARGHAMEE-2

black and white on the book.

Q. Yes. Well,

A. When you're talking about the power, it's essentially one is the actual power. What is there? These are the powers that he has.

Q. When you were the chancellor, how much power did you have? What could you implement? What could you do? What could you not do?

A. The point is this, that if it was black and white, I think I should have been able to implement it. If I didn't implement it, it wasn't because I didn't have the power. For example, the Shah had no power of black and white in Aryamehr University of Technology. But he had a hell of a power.

Q. That's what I mean.

A. There was no written power that was vested to him. Nothing had to get the approval of the Shah. But there were a certain number of decisions that went up, nevertheless.

Q. Well, you see, this is actually what I'm after, because on the one hand, one can read the by-laws of the university,

but on the other, you are the person that actually worked there.

A. I don't think Let me tell you this thing. With the exception of my struggle with Komiteh-e Refah <Committee for Welfare>, which was even prior to me getting the position, I just didn't like that establishment, and I didn't think the university should get involved into the union form of informal government. With the exception of that, whatever I wanted, I could do. But I had to struggle. I had to fight, I had to present a reasonable thing.

Of course, the Komiteh-e Refah was a big struggle, because I didn't agree with some of the things they were demanding. And so at the same time I was pressured to take that up. So I was proposing something that I really didn't believe. With the exception of whatever was initiated from Komiteh-e Refah, whatever I wanted I could do. But, within the black and white, I am saying.

That means I couldn't change the content of a course. I couldn't change the attitude of the professor. I couldn't kick out a professor who was tenured. I even couldn't kick out a professor that wasn't tenured! I mean, that I mean, practically I did that, and it backfired.

ZARGHAMEE-2

Q. (unclear), you see. I mean, you may not like certain things that Komiteh-e Refah did. How did you deal ... How did you solve certain problems you had? (unclear)

A. Oh it was a fight, it was a fight. It was a fight all the time. The Komiteh-e Refah, which was formed in 1973 Sorry, it was formed way before that, probably in 1971 it was formed. Or maybe

Anyway, it just I think I can find a point which started the thing, now that I think about it. In 1971, one day I was away in Andimeshk, doing work there, and suddenly I heard that there was disruption in the university. And I dropped the work that I was doing, I jumped into a train and came overnight, and got to the university. I found the day before there was a clash between students and the police. And hundreds of students were taken in, and the faculty, some of the faculty, were beaten-up because they looked like students anyway. Aryamehr University had very young faculty.

Q. You were youthful yourself.

A. I was much younger at that time!

Q. I am sure, in 1971.

A. Anyway -- the entire faculty met the next day, and en bloc handed in their resignation. That means this was the first organized activity as a protest to what had happened. This was the first organized activity that took place.

I was under the impression -- I never knew about it exactly -- that following this activity.... Well, these are facts: Prime Minister Hoveida called the faculty in, I was appointed before that by the faculty to go, because I wasn't involved emotionally with whatever happened since I was in Andimeshk. I was given the responsibility to go and collect, and find out who was killed, because there was a rumor that students got killed, and collect the students. Because nobody knew where they were.

Q. Were you on the side of the university? Were you upset about what had happened?

A. Oh, yes. And so I went and I went to various hospitals, because some of them were badly injured. And I went to even -- I got ..., the chancellor got permission, I went inside the prison and I collected the kids from there. Many of them were released, with the exception of six people who were detained for several months. One of them happened to be a student of mine, and I asked him, "Why did they detain you?"

ZARGHAMEE-2

He said, "My uncle is Khomeini." His name was Ebrahim Hendi Nejad.

Q. (unclear)

A. And -- no comment. He was a very funny man, I remember. When I went inside the prison, and it was Zendan-e movaghat shahrhani <Temporary police detention center> at that time, he came to me and said He came to the guard behind me, and asked him, "Sir, where is the way out?" I was laughing at that time -- the rest of the people in jail, and this guy is joking.

Anyway, that was the first organized activity. I heard after that, although I never had concrete evidence, that SAVAK asked the chancellor at that time to expel a number of professors. That of course never took place, because the chancellor went to His Majesty. That was one of the cases.

Q. Who was the chancellor?

A. The Chancellor was Reza Amin.

A. He went to His Majesty and said that that would just destroy the university. His Majesty approved and everything was rosy. I heard also that from then on there was always

this element of fear. That SAVAK was not ... wanted always to prove that the thing they had proposed previously was something that was right, and the intervention of the chancellor was not correct.

So when Komiteh-e Refah was formed, which was -- the second time it was formed was after a number of promotions were denied by the committee of the faculty that was looking at promotions. I was a member of that committee, and we proposed very stringent regulations. And then the faculty again collected around several, and they did a collective action: they walked out of the They had several meetings, and they walked out of the University Council, and this sort of thing.

Following that, this sort of was the crystallizing element, and then the Komiteh-e Refah was formed and gained more power at the time that Reza Amin was chancellor. And then later on when Hossein Nasr was chancellor, he was very lenient to them because at that time the country was wallowing in funds, and -- I mean, they were giving it right and left. And Komiteh-e Refah could gain a lot of ground because they were always one step ahead demanding something, and the government was responding immediately anyway.

And then, when I came into power -- I came to the office of

the chancellorship -- the government had changed its policy. Now the policy had changed in 1975 that we are not going to give any more raises, inflation is killing the country, destroying everything that was made, etc., etc. And the policy was to stand firm. That's essentially what Hoveida was saying. And I stood firm. The Komiteh-e Refah wanted, and we said no.

And they started going on strike, and this, and that, and, well, it was getting harsher and harsher.

Q. Did you have meetings together?

A. Oh yes, we were meeting ... I mean (?) -- they were my friends, after all. I mean, but we may have different views on things, but we were eating together and this sort of thing ...

Q. I was just interested ...

A. No, it was We were meeting. I told them, "Hey, let's go to this, and that." Several people who were sick, and who were part of this Komiteh-e Refah found this medium of Komiteh-e Refah to express their opinion quite well.

At the same time, Abdul Hossein Sanii had become Minister of

Higher Education, and he was under the impression that there should be a kingdom called Higher Education. And he the king, the throned king of the Higher Education system. And I could not accept that sort of thing. I didn't believe in anything outside Universities had enough trouble already -- they didn't need a king to command them.

Of course, he had In several instances I should tell him although I disagree with him now, and then, and I would do it again. But he was given a ministry with nobody under him. I mean, the Minister of Roads was in charge of all the roads. I mean, he was Minister of Higher Education. He wanted to become in charge of all the higher education system. And he wasn't. I mean, he had ...

In Hay'at-e Omana <Board of Trustees>, which consisted of Sharif-Emami, Prime Minister Hoveida, at that time, and Alam, and ... then all the other people, all the high people, the Minister of Higher Education was the tiniest figure at the corner. So he couldn't carry that much weight in front of at least three or four Prime Ministers. I mean, Alam, Sharif-Emami, Hoveida, and Eghbal. These were four Prime Ministers sitting there! And what did Mr. Abdol Hossein Sanii want to say?

So, if I wanted an approval from somebody I would get it! I

ZARGHAMEE-2

didn't need him. And the fact that whether I should have another Anyway, I have a number of stories of opposition with Mr. Abdol Hossein Samii from the outside.

My problem with inside the university was primarily with a power-struggle, a difference in philosophy, and it ... it happened. The thing is this, the same problem BU had in this country -- I don't know if you are familiar with the problem of BU? But there is a court that finally you can go to.

Q. (unclear) the chancellor and the faculty body here at BU?

A. Yes, at BU. And it essentially was the same thing: formation of a union and the union declared strikes of the faculty. And what are you going to do? Well, in this country you have a legal system that can declare if a strike is authorized or unauthorized. And once the strike is unauthorized, well, that's it. It settles the issue.

In Iran, the problem was these avenues didn't exist for you. You couldn't go to Vezerat-e Dadgoostari (Ministry of Justice) and declare a strike that even the country was not declaring in the newspapers -- that such a thing was happening. You couldn't get a decision made. Now where did you have to go? You go to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister called some of the guys and gave them wine, boxes of

wine, that they took home. And they were happy with the Prime Minister. They thought the Prime Minister was going to give whatever they want him to.

But nevertheless, their dealings with the Prime Minister and this sort of thing again established a stronger basis for this informal structure. I had At times, the Prime Minister was almost running the show so far as dealing with this kind of thing. And I expressed to the Prime Minister: "I want out of this job. The reason why I accepted was" Anyway, the ...

Q. You were saying your reasons for....

A. Yes, I wanted out of the job because I didn't want this sort of dealing. I wanted to I thought that the chancellorship would give me an opportunity to build a university in Esfahan. It did. And I did that, regardless of what was going on in Tehran, I built that university in 1977.

Just a few days before I was removed from the Chancellorship of the university, the university opened. And it is now known as Technological University of Esfahan. The word Aryamehr was dropped.

ZARGHAMEE-2

Danesh Aryamehr Tehran? Well, lost most of its faculty. Many of them later got killed, and the students got killed. There was tremendous politicization among the students. The Marxists had the upper hand, finally. But it essentially fell into the hands of the mullahs, and many people left. But still it's a good university, and is called now Daneshgah Sharif.

Q. Sharif?

A. Sharif was, I think he was a student of mine, because I was teaching some of the big courses. I don't know whether he was or not, but I think he was a student of mine. He got killed by his colleagues who happened to be in Mujaheddin. He was a Mujahed.

Q. He was killed by his own colleagues?

A. By his own colleagues. Because Mujaheddin -- there was a division in the Mujaheddin, and at that time there was Marxist Mujaheddin and more Islamic Mujaheddin. And he was an Islamic Mujahed that got killed by the Marxist Mujaheds. And they -- in order to demonstrate the opposition of the government with Marxists who had the upper hand, at least in numbers, after the revolution, they called the university "Sharif" ... as a thorn inside the eyes of the Marxist

ZARGHAMEE-2

Mujaheddin.

Q. Let me just ask one more question before we end this session. You were saying about when you came back from Andimeshk, when you went to the prisons, and you found out about all these students. What happened? I guess this got left out. Did you go to the Prime Minister?

A. No. I didn't go to the Prime Minister. I was reporting to the faculty. And the faculty and students wanted me to go and find And anyway, I found out. I located everybody. And it was established that nobody had been killed, and everybody was out anyway. But that created the I would consider

This occurred a few weeks after the group of Siyahkal was found. So this was parallel activity. And it was probably influenced by the fact that some of the Siyahkal Group came from Aryamehr University, and they had activities and organizations there. I think that the first "Marg bar Shah" <Death to the Shah> in the modern era was right there. And so the police went inside the university and just did a good job of demolishing it (unclear).

Anyway, that was The net product of that was this: I took the students home to their parents. The students were

ZARGHAMEE-2

released from prison, etc. etc. Then after that for a few months the university was in disarray, until they formed Shoray-e Daneshgah <University Council>, and Shoray-e Daneshgah reorganized.

Q. Was Hay'at-e Omana <Board of Trustees> at all supportive of your activities in that regard?

A. Hay'at-e Omana wasn't involved. Hay'at-e Omana raised all these old issues that he wanted money for.

Q. You know, what you did was something unconventional.

A. Well, that was I did a lot of unconventional things. But that was because of my own selection and because of the fact that the faculty of Aryamehr University was unconventional.

Q. Thank you very much.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LAJNEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DYBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE

DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 21, 1985

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA

INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI

TAPE NO.: 3

RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 03

ALAM, ASAQULLAH, AS MINISTER OF COURT

AMIN, MOHAMMAD-REZA

ALLAMEHR TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BEHBEHANI, MOHAMMAD-JAFAR

CLERGY, GOVERNMENT & THE

CLERGY, POLITICAL ROLE OF

CLERGY, POPULARITY OF

DEVELOPMENT & ITS IMPACT ON THE POPULATION

DEVELOPMENT & MODERNIZATION

EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF & LHER

EDUCATION, REFORM OF

NASE, HOSSEIN

RAHNAMA, MAJID

REZA, PROFESSOR ?

SAMII, ABDOL-HOSSEIN

SHAH, ROLE & ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE OF THE

SHAH, STUDENTS AND THE

STUDENT PROTESTS & ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS

STUDENTS, ARREST OF

ZARGHAMEE-3

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghamee

Date: February 21, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape no.: 3

Q. Dr. Zarghamee, I'd like to start by asking you a question about, you know, again, the Aryamehr University. How were chancellors of Aryamehr University selected? And who were the individuals who influenced this selection?

A. I think that Aryamehr University ... Now, I have to conjecture -- it's not factual. I don't know, really, how they were selected. But I have some clues. It appears that somehow the Shah decided in 1965 to form a technical university that would really be able to generate the necessary manpower in the form of engineers and scientists needed for his industrialization program. I think that was the time that the steel mill in Esfahan was being planned, or in the construction stages at some point.

So Mr. Behbehanian, who was actually in the ministry of court, told me that the Shah consulted him. And somehow the name of somebody came up at that time, which wasn't really a part of the political system: Mojtabedi. Mojtabedi was selected. His devotion to Elborz High School was quite clear to everybody. Somehow they thought he would be the best one.

It's a departure from the usual politicization of the position of the chancellor which was so well enmeshed into the fabric of Iran's politics. I mean, the chancellor of Tehran University was a highly political man.

After Mojtabedi, the selection of Professor Reza as the next chancellor was really based on the recommendation of Vazir Oloum, who was the Minister of Science, at that time Majid Rahnema. Majid Rahnema apparently came to know Professor Reza, and he was a distinguished educator. And he brought him back to Iran and placed him as the chancellor of Aryamehr University. He was not a member of the political structure in Iran in any way.

The third man that was selected as Chancellor of the university was Reza Amin. He came from a banking background. When he was being introduced -- I was one of the professors at the time -- when he was being introduced, Mr. Alam said that Mr. Alam was at that time the head of the Board of

ZARGHAMEE-3

Trustees -- he brought him and he said, "I want to tell you that this country is all about. I didn't know the name of Mr. Reza Amin until this morning!"

Apparently Reza Amin at that time was working with Kheradjou. Kheradjou was in the Industrial Development Bank, and he was reporting directly to the Shah. And somehow the Shah must have heard of him in some manner. The Prime Minister really didn't know him also. I mean, it didn't come from the Prime Minister. It didn't come from the Ministry of Court. And it couldn't have come from SAVAK, because these are not the kind of people that SAVAK would have chosen.

The fourth man that was selected as the Chancellor of Aryamehr University was Dr. Nasr. Dr. Nasr I think came to Aryamehr University with the philosophy that he was thinking, at least, or he had discussed it with various people, including the Shah himself. And the philosophy was essentially moving more toward religion and sort of creating a religious environment, which is not as foreign to the students who come from backgrounds with value systems that are more traditional and enmeshed into their religion.

He was trying to sort of bring the culture of the country into the university so that the university would not be a new experience totally foreign to the culture of the students.

He had beautiful thoughts, apparently, but he never really tried to discuss it with anybody, and sort of, to sell his thoughts. He didn't work on it that hard, although he really pushed his way through. He wanted to build a mosque at Aryamehr University, and this sort of thing. But it never materialized the way that he wanted.

When I became chancellor, I know that my selection was based on a policy that the government of Hoveida had adopted, and had sold the idea to the Shah. The idea was this: let us move away from the idea of selecting the chancellor out of politicians, and let us now go to selecting the chancellor amongst the faculty themselves.

I was a full professor at that time, and I was one of the three -- two or three -- full professors. The rest of them were in Chemistry, one of them was in Mathematics, one in Chemistry, and I was in Mathematics, but I had a Ph.D. in Engineering, and I had lots of experience in administration of the university, so I was selected.

The selection was based on a policy At the same time at Mashhad University they selected Matini, who was also a professor, as the chancellor. And this went on for a while. But not too long. They resorted back to selecting politicians and putting them as chancellor. But at the time

ZARGHAMEE-3

I was selected, that was the policy.

I think that should answer you.

Q. Yea. (unclear). I have one follow-up question concerning Professor Nasr's religious inclinations and philosophy for the university. How was the Shah's reaction to his approach?

A. Very favorable. He came at one (public audience at the Imperial Court) and stood in front of all of us. The faculty of Aryamehr University was very young. And he said -- well, he usually, in order to bring forth the people he would select or nominate, he would back him up by expressing their views as his own in front of others.

So at the public audience at Nowruz or somewhere -- the first public audience that Nasr was nominated, he stood there, and he sort of lectured to the faculty of Aryamehr University, saying that, "really it's time now that the culture of the country and religion of the country be brought into the university and an environment be created which is not so antagonistic, that has to be enmeshed with all walks of life," and this sort of thing. Very much like lectures that you would have heard from Khomeini afterwards.

The idea was expressed that really if Nasr had spent enough time he would have been able to accomplish a lot. But it takes a lot of convincing. You can't just force your way through. And of course at the time Nasr was chancellor he was confronted with a lot of student unrest and activity.

Q. Just that, given the Shah's commitment to Persian history, I wondered how it

A. Well, he had Somebody had sold him the idea. The idea was this: that a large number or a large percentage of these students come from small villages, where you can't find even an achar farance (wrench) or screwdriver, or something like that. The word achar farance (wrench) I said, because this was the word that was used by the Prime Minister at the time. This guy then comes to a university, and he suddenly gets exposed to the highest level of engineering and scientific ideas.

He's removed from his culture and from his environment and is brought to Tehran. In Tehran he's really prone (?) in the middle of the monstrous city with movies that showed primarily from the breasts down. And he looks at boys and girls, Tehrani boys and girls, who could go out on dates, even. And he had to accept the environment. And he couldn't -- he couldn't cope with that. The environment was totally

ZARGHAMEE-3

foreign to him. Even sometimes he would feel ashamed of going and praying, because that wasn't something that was being done.

Somehow there had to be an extension of his environment into the university. The thought was beautiful, actually. But nobody attempted to sell it. It was really -- with hindsight I realize what Nasr had told the Shah. I mean, when I put the entire picture together. He tried to accomplish that by making a mosque, or this sort of thing. But really this was a much deeper thought, and it should have really integrated the entire faculty through lots of discussions and this sort of thing.

I could have seen also that if he had exposed the faculty to the idea very plainly and clearly, he would have received a lot of opposition from groups that had a Marxist way of thinking. That's maybe why he really The thought was there, the Shah's backing was there. But it was never implemented.

Q. Thank you. How would the incumbent chancellor learn of his removal?

A. Oh! I believe in most cases he was informed. In my own case, the Prime Minister called -- it was Azouzegar -- and

told me that His Majesty has commanded that we should offer you the highest position, etc, etc. This sort of words. And the new chancellor will be introduced tomorrow, or today, or something like that.

But usually, you knew. I mean, more or less you knew that
....

Q. How would you know?

A. You knew because you wanted to get the hell out of there. It was not an exciting job. It was, once you'd become a chancellor, such a stressful job, that Especially Aryamehr University was a very tough position. You had to deal with student unrest, you had to deal with budget cuts, that at that time was You needed money you didn't have. You needed the cooperation of the government, you didn't have it.

The government expected that chancellors would have a magic wand and they would sort of twirl it and suddenly all the unrest would disappear.

On the other hand, the students looked at the chancellor as an agent of the government. In fact, some of them even associated words that "He must be SAVAKI or something

ZARGHAMEE-3

like that." Actually none of the people I know of at Aryamehr University had any association with SAVAK or anything like that. You saw the list, I told you the names, it didn't come up from that source at all.

You had to deal with very tough problems that you were not equipped by your training to deal with. Nobody gets an education in America and learns about how to deal with riots in a suppressive government regime, and students who really don't know what the hell they are saying. I mean, it's not a It's a comedy of mistakes and blunders and this sort of thing.

The student who is shouting and screaming, when you really sat down and talked to him, it wasn't political. He even hadn't matured to have political opposition at the time. The government really didn't have any avenue open at the time for some sort of If a problem existed, through those avenues it would be resolved.

I said that the problem of the formation of a union by the faculty. Well, here in this country you have got courts that can make decisions whether a strike is acceptable or not. Many of these avenues the bureaucracy had not really perfected. In a society where students were naive, young, unexposed to ideas, and the government really had problems --

they wanted to achieve a lot in a short time -- construction and this and that. And a number of students, and quality

And then you wanted, by your own commitment, to establish high standards of education, and this. There were a number of very complex issues in front of the chancellor without that much in his hands. He didn't have anything in his hand really to build with.

But I suppose that that must be a characteristic of a developing country. It's really exposure, and infiltration, and finally takeover of another culture and value system on the prevailing value system. This transformation is not easy. It creates lots of strain. And the guy who was being pulled from all directions was the chancellor.

Q. So the removal of chancellors was pretty much like their selection -- either mentioned by a person or just desired by the Shah.

A. Oh, usually, either the conditions deteriorated, in the sense that there was It would have been clear to anybody that a change would be coming about soon. Or, otherwise, he would be told. But it was really a pleasure to learn about that.

Q. During your two-year term as Chancellor of Aryamehr University, how many times did you have an audience with the Shah?

A. I would say -- by audience, I am talking about an audience in which I had an opportunity to talk to him for a length of time other than just one or two sentences -- I would say four or five times.

Q. Could you describe some of these audiences?

A. All of these audiences were upon my own request. And I was told that whenever a guy has ... every few months the Chancellor of Aryamehr University should have an audience. This was told to me by the previous chancellor.

I delayed my first audience until four months or something after I was in office. I went there and -- I remember I had a shaky voice, and we had a long discussion. The content of that discussion I I remember one of them had to do with the Rastakhiz Party, because I told you about that before.

Another part of it was a commitment to the quality of education and research. I wanted to sort of establish a basis, that this is what we are going to do.

A third item had to do with student unrest. I remember at that time we entered into an argument about the role of the Guards. It was not an argument -- a discussion. During this discussion, the Shah was not ordering me at all. He was arguing, and I opposed his views with counterarguments. And he heard it, and we talked back and forth. What I told him, I remember, was what I told you a few minutes ago.

I sort of made an analysis of the student body, where they were coming from. I gave him statistics: so many people are coming from Tehran, so many and from what walks of life. I gave the Shah how I would categorize these students from a social point of view, from a political point of view. What are their thoughts, by and large, and what are the problems?

I told him of the sort of a dream that I had -- it wasn't really a plan. I said that we had to -- in a country like Iran, in which we are embarking on a program of education and developing industry at the same time, we can lose relevance very easily. Relevance in social studies is very simple; in technical subjects it's very hard. I mean, thermodynamics supposedly is thermodynamics -- you can't change it. It's true.

ZARGHAMEE-3

But nevertheless, this compilation of courses and this sort of thing can really be directed into goals that are meaningless, because as you're creating this pyramid of technical skill in the students, you are not building this pyramid on foundations of an intimate understanding of the technique. I said that I would like to create a tie between industry and the university. And what we should do....

I opposed one of the Shah's principles -- I said I don't like this principle of free education in the way that it was administered. I thought in lieu of that we should have sponsors, industrial sponsors. For example, various factories would sponsor these students, and the government funds, if any, should be directed in such a way that the industry would step forward and say, "I want these students and I will sponsor them."

If somebody needs money, he would get that sort of sponsorship. The sponsorship would be materialized in a program of direct supervision of the industry on the students' progress, giving them work at the industry during summer vacations, or even in a cooperative program. Taking him and bringing him out and really the student would feel a relevance. I mean, why is he taking complex statistical mechanics when there are problems associated with crystal growth that he should have known about? Well, this would

ZARGHAMEE-3

have brought in

And the Shah said, "That is what I meant when I said free education! Write a letter to me and explain that." So when I got out I wrote a letter and I explained that this is my view. And he sent that with a comment to the Prime Minister that "this is what I meant amouzeesh-e rayegan <free education> at university level should be. Take this idea and see what you can do with it in a more applicable form. Because what I expressed was primarily in science and technology.

The response that came out was incomprehensible. I don't know. It probably went from the Prime Minister to Sazman-e barnameh <Plan Organization>, went all the way down to some level, and they wrote back a letter saying of course It was a very bureaucratic answer. The Shah, apparently, when he read the response, he had all forgotten about what was the

I mean, the Shah had a very hard time to associate the response with the principle ideas because he was getting exposed to so many different things. Anyway, that sort of died.

We started a program with two or three industries, including

ZARGHAMEE-3

a petrochemical industry, Machine Sazi-y-e Tabriz

<Machine Factory of Tabriz>

Q. When you say "we" -- at Aryamehr University?

A. At Aryamehr University. In which we were sending -- it was a cooperative type of program. We actually gave students credit for work that they would do in a group, in an industry, under the supervision of a professor. We would send a professor with 20 or 30 students into an industry, and let them work there. They would get instruction there, not only by their own professors, but also by engineers in that industry. And they would work there, from very low-level work, and they would be rotated.

That was a relatively successful program. If I had had the opportunity and I had stayed there, I would have expanded it much further, but Anyway, that must have died after the revolution also. It was a very good thought.

Of other audiences I had, I remember one audience that I took ... we discussed research to a great length, and I took with me Mr. Samsam Bakhtiari, who was one of the Assistant Professors, or morabi <instructors>, at Aryamehr University.

ZARGHAMEE-3

He had developed a piece of equipment which would have broken all the codes. We showed -- we just mounted it on the Shah's telephone and broke the code automatically.

He later asked the Setad-e Artesh (Chiefs of Staff) to sponsor research, and they actually came up with a proposal that they would make a whole research center in Larizan for coding/decoding electronic devices that we would develop. That program went ahead until the days I was there -- very good. I don't know if you know or not, coding/decoding devices by Act of Congress cannot be sold to other countries. I might have mentioned that. And that was another

In another case I discussed with him another development that we had done at the university, in which we had come up with a way to increase the efficiency of the paykan (a car made in Iran) engine. And Khayami supported that research.

There was lots of research. I tried to always in my audiences give the Shah a flavor of what really research is going to do, and how should it be directed, because the Shah was -- in 1968 there was a Ramsar conference, and the Shah was against the (?), against research. In 1969, he had accepted that there would be research. He thought that research would be a waste of time in 1968. At the time he

ZARGHAMEE-3

wasn't really convinced that research would be that useful.

I mean, research and technology and sciences.

But once I had an audience, I talked to him at length about the development of a research center -- a national research center for physics and mathematics, in which we would bring Professor Abdolsalam, who is a Nobel Prize winner (he got his Nobel Prize, I think, in 1980 or something like that -- Professor Abdolsalam is from Pakistan), and make an international center for research in physics and mathematics.

This would be a theoretical center, primarily. Later on, it may develop into a non-theoretical -- experimental. But primarily it was theoretical. The purpose of it was what I consider maintenance of physicists. I said the community of physicists and mathematicians was growing, and you need a purpose and you need maintenance. These people die out. Their capability fades very fast. And you need a center for maintaining their technical expertise.

So we would bring in excellent physicists or mathematicians, and they would conduct 15-day, 20-day seminars, and sort of try to crystalize research in those areas. So you would give exposure to your

He sent that to the Atomic Energy Organization, and that was

ZARGHAMEE-3

killed. It never was His commitment to research was -- I mean, it was very hard to convince him that, really, technical research was meaningful or was necessary. He wouldn't give priority to that.

I had another long discussion with him -- always I had long discussions with him on Esfahan Campus Project Development: what we were doing, what was the stage of development, what were the ideas behind it, the philosophy of the university, which was, I think And he was extremely interested. He would raise questions, and this sort of thing.

I recall another time. I went to him and I said that, well, in my first analysis of the students, I was

Q. I'm sorry, this was after you had become the chancellor?

A. All of these were during the time I was chancellor. But this story is really towards the end of it.

I'll never forget this argument. I said, "In the first time that I had an audience with you, I was under the impression that there were groups, relatively sizable groups of students, who have political thoughts, and these political thoughts were impressed by Marxism, Marxist ideas. Since then, I've had a lot more exposure and information, and I

ZARGHAMEE-3

would like to tell you that the Marxist aspect is just the infiltration of two or three people. The main problem is religious. And that is really ... it's essentially opposition which stems from religion."

I will never forget this answer. This was his answer -- it is one of the things that I remember. I thought about this when I was in jail for four and a half months, almost every day. He said, "Have you passed through Qom?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Have you passed there on Sunday?" I said, "Yes." He said, "How many people were lined up outside of that movie?"

There's a cinema in Qom -- it was enormous! I remember. I passed. I used to go to Esfahan quite frequently for the construction of the university. There were hundreds and thousands of people who wanted to get into the movie. This is 1977.

He said, "Right now, about 75% of Iran is covered by television. Whenever they have this movie which is Morad Barghi, you can't see anybody in the streets. Everybody is watching television." Morad Barghi was a show that -- it was a dumb show, I think. It was a guy who ... anyway, it was a plebian man essentially having problems and ...

He said, "The value-system of Morad Barghi is becoming the value-system of (telephone) Anyway, he said, "That is becoming a part of the culture. You have 75% (68% percent -- I don't remember, the number was somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of the country) being covered by television. Television is changing the entire value-structure of the country. Movies are being established in every town, every village. I promise you (now, these are his words), in two years, you won't have a problem, any more a problem of religion in this country."

In two years time, he was almost removed himself by religion. But he told me at that time, "What you are telling me is opposite to all the reports that I am getting." But he argued with me for 15 minutes on this point. In that audience -- I think that audience took at least 45 minutes to one hour, about half an hour more than what it should have taken. He argued back and forth on that point.

Q. That's incredible. So how long were usually your audiences with him?

A. Between, I think, half an hour to one hour.

Q. And how would you make these appointments?

ZARGHAMEE-3

A. I would call and say I want to come and ...

Q. Call his office?

A. Yes. And then they would call me back and say to come tomorrow or come the day after or come the week after. Usually it was within two or three days, they would give me an audience.

Q. I have one follow-up question. You said that you delayed your first audience with him. Why, may I ask?

A. Oh, I was up-tight. I didn't know what to say. I didn't know.... Anyway, there wasn't any sort of physical reason for it. First of all, I wanted to have something to say.

All these audiences Apparently I I don't know how was the audience of other people, but in all the audiences I had, there was discussion going back and forth. I remember one day I told my father that the Shah started walking when he was talking to me, and I walked along with him, around the room. He used to put his fingers in his and he walked around the room. And I was walking with him.

He said, "You shouldn't have done that! You should have

ZARGHAMEE-3

stayed near the door and he would then walk." I said, "No, I walked along with him."

Q. Well, now I'd like to get some description about going into the palace, from the time you entered the gates until the time you'd exit, you know. I would like you to recall as much as possible.

A. OK. It was in Niavarān, most of them. I would go in. The car would take me to an inner court. I would get out. Or I would walk -- from the outside door I would walk -- to the inner court. There was a gate between the inner court and the outer court that somebody would ask me, "Who are you?" And I would say, "I'm such-and-such a person." And they would check the name, and I would go in.

Q. Were you searched?

A. No. Well, at least I don't recall ever to have been searched. I would go in a waiting room. I would sit down, and they would bring me tea or something. And the people who were waiting, they would talk. I was -- most of the time I was up-tight, so I wasn't doing much talking.

Q. Were you at awe in his presence? Were you?

ZARGHAMEE-3

A. Oh yes. And then, somebody would say There was a sort of a male secretary that would tell me, "Come in." And I would go in. And then, on the return, I would go out of the door, go and sit in my car, and get out.

Q. When you were talking with him, were you sitting down or standing?

A. No, I was standing -- or walking with him. No, I never -- I was One argument I had with a bunch of other people, and this was

I forgot to tell you about this. This was a group-audience. It was Dr. Farhang Mehr, and Prime Minister Amouzegar, and Mr. Ansari, and Mr. Madjidi. We went to discuss with the Shah the concept of Hay'at-e Omana (Board of Trustees). Apparently the minister had convinced the Shah that Hay'at-e Omana is not a good way because the same bunch of people repeatedly appear on every Hay'at-e Omana. And I

Mr. Amouzegar called me and asked me to go in the meeting. And over there I said that these are the concepts. Essentially these are the authorities. I think I even prepared a document that I gave to the Queen, also, indirectly. Mr. Mofidi and I sat down and prepared that

document.

The document was a division of authorities. What is essentially the right of a student, and duties of a student? What is the right of a faculty and duties of a faculty? And what is the right of the administration of the university and what is the right of Hay'at-e Omana? And what is the right of the government? Of the government who has a right? And definitely then I drew up essentially where are the boundaries of authority and responsibility.

I remember at that time I introduced the concept of a senate -- a sort of university senate, in which students and faculty, and higher would be represented there. And you would have discussion. But somehow those thoughts never got off the ground, even.

But the Shah was exposed to it. That was another audience. But it was a group-audience: four or five.

Q. When you were with him, was there usually a secretary present?

A. Nobody.

Q. Nobody was present.

A. He would then tell me, for example, "Write about this a letter to me." If he had to take an action, he would ask me to write a letter. I remember, I wrote

Or, he would say, "Get with such-and-such, such a person." On that thing concerning <the Rastakhiz Party and the philosophy of the revolution>, I remember that immediately Ra'is-e Daftar Makhsons called me and said, "What did you discuss with His Majesty? Because His Majesty asked me to prepare a farman <decree> for the government." And I told him. But anyway, apparently the wording of that came out of the mouth of the Shah himself. I mean dialectic and this sort of thing....

On this I had funding problems. I remember I had a funding problem. There was another audience that I discussed solely the problems of the faculty with him. And he said, "Go to the Prime Minister. Sit with the Prime Minister. Build your Esfahan campus. And I'll ask him to provide all the funds and ask him to solve the problems of the faculty."

So following that, the Prime Minister almost took over the running of the university. They came, and they sort of had meetings between the Prime Minister and the faculty, and they gave the dissident faculty boxes of wine, and this sort of

thing. Anyway, somehow he wanted to build housing for them. Because he had set up The faculty wanted more salary, and the Prime Minister had sort of put a freeze on increases because of the inflation that ensued from the oil revenue increase.

Q. Aside from questions dealing with the Eafahan Project you describe on tape 1 of the interview, what were the subjects you brought to the Shah's attention?

A. I gave you all of them.

Q. Right. Some of these questions may be repeated, so if

A. I gave you an account of all of them, as I recall.

Q. Right. OK. Now, were decisions made in your presence by the Shah? This is what I was going to ask you. You said later on some of the ideas you had never got I mean, he would say, "All right"

A. No. No decision was made. What I saw was a very democratic Shah. He never made a decision for the government; he always said, "I will recommend" -- "Man toariyeh mikonam" -- I will recommend to the government to

ZARGHAMEE-3

provide the necessary funds." Or: "Go and talk to the Prime Minister." If he had to make a decision himself, he would definitely say, "Write me." So I would have written him. And then the government was given an opportunity to respond.

I had one audience with him after I became the Managing Director of Copper, at which time I talked about the railroad, and I talked about molybdenum and copper, and the schedule, and this sort of thing. But that was no argument even, it was just factual -- reporting of the progress.

But at the university, every time our argument was factual -- I mean, was non-factual. It was really sitting and discussing something. Well, not sitting -- standing and discussing.

But all these times he was also standing and walking. He was never sitting down when I was standing up. He was also standing up.

Q. He would never be sitting while you were

A. No.

Q. Interesting.

ZARGHAMEE-3

A. Yes. Once he sat, and that was when we were fixing the telephone -- bugging the telephone system. It was unbugging the system. Because his telephone was coded and then we put a device that broke the code automatically. And later on he gave us funds to establish from artesh, from the army, he gave us funds to establish a whole research and development Center in Electronics for coding and decoding.

Q. You said that you found a "democratic Shah," yet when you would write him and he would send your recommendations to the Prime Minister or other officials

A. They ignored it, apparently. It wasn't

Q. Why didn't they follow the Shah's orders?

A. I don't think that they felt that they had to. There was I never saw a Shah that was This is What I am talking about is limited exposure. A Shah that was portrayed, especially after the revolution -- or even in the media before the revolution.

He could have told me: "No! You have build that university such and such! You have to do this! You have to get those students this or that!" He was always arguing. I remember this argument that we had about the existence of guards in

ZARGHAMEE-3

the university. He said, "You are coming I mean, you did most of your education in America. Haven't you seen in America the University Police is walking with a gun that big? We are even not letting these people carry guns!"

I said, "Well, this is the society. I mean, the environment is different." But we had that argument with him. And he finally said, "OK. You go ahead and do what you want to do."

Q. It's just that it's ... You know, it's baffling to me to see that the Shah would give specific orders, and he would even discuss them with you, yet they were not carried out.

A. Oh, I think that if you go and There are a number of ways to avoid a job which is tough to perform. Giving money away to students is very easy. Every student should be given 300 toman for housing, 200 toman for living expenses, and this sort of thing, is very easy to do and very easy to administer. Really trying to satisfy needs is very hard to do. You have to do a lot of thinking.

And I can imagine that the Prime Minister, ministers, etc. were so much entrapped into the bureaucracy of just operation, with the number of new projects that were permissible by the increased oil revenue, there wasn't that much thought going into these projects or into the cost item.

Q. Again, some of these questions might be a bit repetitive, or you have said it in one way or another, but I'd still like to read them to you (unclear). Did this system of decision-making, that is, the Shah's system of decision-making, create any problems for you and others?

A. The only part that created a problem for me is the part that I talked about yesterday. That was a long time ago, at the time of Mojtahedi. Amouzegar went to His Majesty and said that the university should go to Esfahan, and that's why they could afford paying higher salaries. And just the problems The decision that was made in the Shah's presence that the university should go to Esfahan created a lot of headaches for me.

But that was really Amouzegar's thoughts and this sort of thing. But the Shah was also committed to decentralization, and he Anyway, so far as I remember, these were the only ones. There were a couple of minor details that created headaches for me because other people had audiences. But I wrote back to His Majesty.

I remember a friend of mine, Abbas Fazeli, had a laboratory called Microchemical and Biochemical Research Center of Aryamehr University. He was working primarily on

ZARGHAMEE-3

fermentation as a process for making protein. And somehow, somebody went to His Majesty and said that this center should become independent. And the Shah sent a letter with a recommendation: see what you have to do.

And I wrote back, and I gave the explanation that this is not wise. I said in a university that research ... if research is cut away from teaching, it loses in a developing country, it loses its meaningful existence. I mean, we have a limited number of people, and we have to use that. We have to expose the students. It's not the research of Fazeli which is of importance to us. It is what it's going to do on the youngsters who are really working around the research lab. They get interested, and they go into these areas. It's the future implication of them.

And the Shah immediately bought it. He sent a letter to the minister and said, "This is the right way of doing things."

Q. The way that you had suggested?

A. Yes.

Q. And was it followed?

A. Yes. The whole idea was dropped.

There was another contractor that wrote him that said that I hadn't made a claim that the university hadn't paid him. Not the contractor -- the engineer who was close to the Queen. And the Shah sent the letter to Sazman-e Barnameh <Plan Organization> and me -- well, not me, at that time Nasr was chancellor: "Why don't you pay people's money?" (unclear)

It was very funny -- I didn't know that guy was "people." Anyway, I remember that I said, "I can't do it." I went to -- even at the time I was vice-chancellor I was in charge of the Esfahan Project, and I would report directly to the Board of Trustees. I said, "I won't do it. I can't do it. This guy -- in my judgment" I declared my judgment. Anyway, the Board of Trustees said that Mr. Madjidi was <Director of the Plan Organization>, and that he should take over and study it.

Mr. Madjidi took over and studied that. Again the letter -- he wrote a letter to the Shah that these guys Anyway, I think somehow Mr. Madjidi decided to give him the money. And they paid the money -- they ordered me to pay the money. Now, this is ...

I brought the contractor to my room -- the consulting

ZARGHAMEE-3

engineer, I mean he was an architect. I brought him to my room, and I said, "Look, I can give you this money, but I can squeeze this money out of you in the future. Now I propose that you build for the university an Architectural School." He said, "But I need the money now! I have run over I'm going to go bankrupt! This! That!" I said, "Well, it's not my fault that you went and bought a whole new building!"

He said, "But if I hadn't got a new building, I wouldn't be able to put up all those people that had to develop the plans for the university." Anyway, he wrote a letter that, "I would like to contribute 8 million tomans to Aryamehr University for making an Architectural School." Or 6 million tomans. "And this can be deducted from my fees, gradually, from now until such-and-such."

Anyway, we paid the money, but we deducted that money gradually.

Q. In the previous session you mentioned conflict between the chancellor of Aryamehr University and the Minister of Higher Education. Could you describe a few of these problems?

A. The problem was this: that the Minister of Higher Education wanted to

ZARGHAMEE-3

Q. Who was the minister?

A. Abdul Hossein Samii.

He wanted to have some reason for existence. There were universities in Iran. And there were sort of ...



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LAJEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DUBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 21, 1985
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA
INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI
TAPE NO.: 4
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH: ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 04

EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF HIGHER

NARAGHI, ENSAN

PRESS, CENSORSHIP OF THE

REVOLUTION, CAUSES OF

SANII, ABDOL-HOSSEIN

STUDENT PROTESTS & ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS

WOMEN

04

ZARGHAMEE-4

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghami

Date: February 21, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape No.: 4

There were centers of higher education. The Ministry of Higher Education had control over centers of higher education. For example, it would approve the formation, it would approve the program. However, on the universities themselves, private universities, like Aryamehr University or Pahlavi University, it had no control. I believe that the promotion of faculty was something that was being approved by some sort of a coordinating committee, or something like that, at the Ministry of Higher Education for public schools, but not for private schools -- private universities.

The private universities and First of all, since he was Even when I became chancellor, he was not introducing me to His Majesty. My introduction was done by Mr. Alam before the Minister of Higher Education. And the Minister of Higher

Education then introduced Mr. Matini, who at the same time became chancellor -- and Mr. fatemi -- of Mashhad University, and Mr. Fatemi, who became chancellor of Farah University.

This was Well, also there was a problem with ... that the Minister of Higher Education had with Hay'at-e Omana (Board of Trustees). Hay'at-e Omana of Aryamehr University consisted of Mr. Eshbai, Alam, Hoveida, and superministers like Amouzegar, and Ansari, and Madjidi, and several other people. This was a very powerful group of people. And the Minister of Higher Education was the tiniest guy who would sit at the end of the table. At one time there were even two members of the royal family in that: Fatemeh Pahlavi and Mrs. Diba. They were members of the Board of Trustees.

If I wanted to approve something, it was very easy for me to go and actually talk to several people, and ask them to put their weight behind it, and it would go through. And that would have created a hell of a problem for the Minister of Higher Education because there would be similar demands from other universities.

Under the pressure of the faculty, I had to bring a number of things, although I really myself understand the position of the Minister of Higher Education. But I had to get them

through. I mean, when you have problems, that's what happens. The Minister of Higher Education had a problem because it wasn't involved with any part of planning. He wasn't planning the higher education system. He wasn't involved with administration. He even didn't have authority on the budget. He didn't have authority to select the head, or anything.

So, the main question: Why the heck am I here? Now, the same question I think in this country the Secretary of Education is asking himself. Some part of The good planning and study part of the authorities of the Minister of Higher Education was invested into a Mo'asseseh <institute>, which was called Mo'asseseh Tahghighat va Barnamehriziy-e Amouzesh va Parouhesh Elmey-e Keshvar <National Institute for Research and Planning of Scientific Training and Research>. The people who were directors of that never really reported to the Minister of Higher Education. They were pretty much independent.

I remember the first head was E'temad. And then, after E'temad, Mehran, Alireza Mehran. And after that, Ehsan Naraghi. They were the directors of that center.

They were doing some educational planning. But primarily it was in the form of coming up with concepts. They came up

ZARGHAMEE-4

with a few beautiful concepts. One was the azad <Open> University, which would have had hundreds of thousands of students all throughout the country. They came up with the concept of the university in Hamedan, at the time of E'temad. Ehsan Naraghi moved more toward the direction of trying to understand what is really ailing education and research in the country. And he brought together a whole bunch or group of people to talk -- sit down and talk.

Anyway, there were a lot of good things, at least intellectually interesting things, going on. But the Ministry of Higher Education was removed from this.

Q. Did the Minister of Higher Education have control over this?

A. Not too much.

Q. No.

A. So the minister wanted to establish I mean, he said, "If I'm in the position of coordinating, I would like to be able to coordinate." The first thing he started to do was to remove the Board of Trustees. Removal of the Board of Trustees meant to the universities, essentially, lack of autonomy. Because then you had ... essentially you were

under some sort of direction of And I think it would have taken initiative out of Ra'is-e Daneshqah <Chancellor of the university> to solve some of the problems.

That's the cause of Otherwise he's a gentleman. I like him.

Q. Please describe the social class of the students and faculty at Aryamehr University.

A. The social class of the students is like this: approximately 50% of the students were Tehrani, and 50% came from other towns. Some of the provinces never contributed much, except one or two, to Aryamehr University. Aryamehr University was taking the best of the technically prone students. I wasn't amazed that Sistan and Baluchistan, banader <ports> were provinces that never contributed. But then, later on, I found out that Kermanshah wasn't doing so well, either. I mean, the point was this: some of the wealthy provinces even were amongst those that never contributed.

A large group of the students who were not Tehranis were coming from essentially Mashhad and Esfahan. The students who were coming from Esfahan were extremely religious. And I think that they played an extremely important role in the

ZARGHAMEE-4

revolution, these students. Students who were coming from Mashhad -- also composed a large number of students -- they were also amongst extremely active students. There was a whole group of students who came from Kerman, who also were active.

Now, when I am saying "active," it means that they were in what I considered terrorist groups. And they got killed or were executed or something of that nature.

Other than these extremely active groups -- and these groups came primarily from a certain number of families. I mean, by their last names, you knew: "here we go again!" You are not going to see this guy for long. They came from, say, at that time I would say altogether 10 or 15 families. And you knew that this guy is the cousin of the guy ... this is his brother. And the brother got killed, so the next brother would be next in line, etc., etc. I mean, the whole family was like that.

And after the revolution, you saw some of these families, like Rezaei, had contributed ... had given, as they said after the revolution, tens of shahid (martyrs) from that family.

Anyway, these were essentially the spread, the geographic

spread, of the students.

From a sex point of view, they had ... we had, I think, about ... initially, I think, when the university was founded, 5%, and toward the end, 15% of the students were women. Student body. Now 15% in areas like metallurgy, and electrical engineering, and this sort of thing, is relatively good. I mean, you compare with even MIT -- they go hand over heel to find a girl to bring to MIT. Even if you're a B-student, and you would never have a chance as a boy to enter MIT, if you're female, you go in. So, we are talking about a very high percentage.

Q. (unclear).

A. Yes. From a class, if I can call it class, from the financial background of the families of these, somewhere around 5% were coming from professional, but 30% from white-collar employees. And the rest from blue-collar and

Now, the numbers I am quoting you are what is approximate in my mind. I have performed this study, and it is reported in various documents in Iran.

Q. So there are actual statistics about the social

ZARGHAMEE-4

background?

A. One of the documents that I prepared, which contained the philosophy of the Esfahan University contained essentially the mix of the students.

Q. Do you know where one can get hold of a copy?

A. Well, one of the guys was the ex-Minister of Higher Education before this guy took over, Fazel, which is right now, was a guy who was a student of mine. His name is Mohammad-Ali Najafi. He was at Esfahan University. And if they haven't destroyed everything with the name of the Shah on it, that document should be available.

Q. Would you say that the students from the provinces were more politically active than students from Tehran?

A. Yes. Yes. It was the activism The students If I categorize the students into four categories, and the four categories are in accordance to whether they are socially or psychologically alienated or not.... So, there would be one group that's neither psychologically nor socially alienated. And one group that would be either psychologically or socially, and one group that would be neither/nor (rather, "both" -- ed.). Anyway, you see what I am talking about.

Most of the students from Tehran fitted in a category that I would consider rarely psychologically alienated.

They may have social alienation, but they were of the type that would come and sit with you and talk, and say, "Hey, this country is worthless!" And I would say, "Why?" And he would say, "There's suppression, this...." He would not hesitate to talk to you, and to express his opinion. He would have a leadership.

The people who were coming from the villages, they had psychological alienation. The source of the psychological alienation was, I think, a value-system problem, or whatever. And the psychological alienation either resulted in somebody who was also socially alienated, and sort of he would be a withdrawn person. Otherwise, they would be people who would become terrorists.

And these people, who were psychologically alienated and socially alienated, they became they coalesced with those who were just socially alienated, which expanded rapidly in 1979, and sort of comprised the entire country. But after the revolution, those who were psychologically alienated actually destroyed the socially alienated and psychologically OK people. It's amazing, but at that time, my interest was really to find these psychologically

ZARGHAMEE-4

alienated people and try to do something for them.

It wasn't the socially alienated. I mean, most of my students were socially alienated. And also the faculty was socially alienated. That was ... Social alienation was not a problem in Iran.

Q. By social

A. I mean, you were criticizing the government. You didn't like the trend. You may have had Marxist ideas, or whatever. That's the Psychologically alienated is the guy who actually picks up the guns and goes and kills somebody.

Now, you can be socially alienated and lead into an uprising, but most of these people.... I knew one of them that got killed -- he didn't use to talk at all. He was adam-e complexa boud (he had complexes). And then -- his name was Blouni -- later on, I read about him, that he was one of the terrorists, and this sort of thing. But he wouldn't pass as a terrorist! He was so naive, so

It was obvious -- none of the terrorists or heroes, later on -- terrorists of the previous regime, heroes of this regime -- were OK people. The guys who were OK -- they would talk, they would even go to prison for two or three months. But

ZARGHAMEE-4

that imprisonment of this group of people by SAVAK was a big mistake, because they would get there, and then become alienated psychologically also, through discussion with these

But essentially they -- the psychologically alienated -- were more -- what I label as psychologically alienated -- you can label it "X," I don't care. I'm not a psychologist to be able to put such a label, but it's in my view. Anyway, the people whom I describe, they were primarily religious activists.

Q. As of when did you sense that anti-regime sentiments were developing among the students?

A. Anti-regime sentiments were always there. It was a part of The same guy who would oppose the Shah on religious grounds, I know that on graduation he would have a glass of whiskey in his hand, and a blonde or brunette or something next to him. I mean, come on, it was a way of life.

In Iran, everybody was anti-regime. Including the Prime Minister himself. They would sit down and criticize -- whenever they had a whiskey in their hand, they would criticize.

ZARGHAMEE-4

Q. Were you ever in any of their sessions?

A. Oh, many people used to criticize. Come on! Half of the guys here, who are now against Khomeini, they were -- at one time, they said, "Oh, that's nice, to have the revolution." I'll never forget, I was once sitting somewhere, relatively recently, and I asked -- this was right immediately after the revolution -- and many people were glad. And when I asked, "What do you think was the cause of the revolution?" And they came out with such stupid remarks. I mean, I can't imagine.

The guy who was, for example, in a department of Tehran University, and another fellow in the same department happened to become a minister. Now, that was the cause of the revolution. Because they didn't come and give a position to this guy also. I mean, that was Come on,

There was a study made in 1970 -- I've got this paper. Somebody from here came and actually measured an index of cynicism. And that was so high. I mean, you ... the people who were really the foundations of the regime were criticizing. Not because they were opposed to the government. They had ... everything they had was from the government -- that's why when the revolution came, everybody was in the boat. You didn't have anybody standing on the

ZARGHAMEE-4

other side, next to the Shah.

The Shah was left alone. All these people who really fed up to here from the Shah's regime, they became opposed. "Oh yes, we opposed these sons of bitches for a long time. We have been criticizing."

Q. So, ever since you remember, the students were anti-regime?

A. They were anti-regime in a sense, but it would fade out. The same guy who was anti-regime, In 1950 <1350>, there was a guy called Ashja', a student. He -- now, I'm not sure, either 1950 <1350> or 1949 <1349> -- was condemned to life imprisonment. And he had friends who later on either were killed or were something, or they became terrorists. The Shah came to the university. They were killing themselves to go next to the Shah and take a picture! The Shah went right in the middle of the graduating class. That's

The opposition to the Shah was symbolic of an age, and we accepted that in the university. The same guys would find employment, and.... Come on, look at the ministers! The ministers of Iran were all student leaders.

Q. That's right. (unclear) you were saying that they didn't

ZARGHAMEE-4

change their minds so much about being opposed to the Shah's policies. I get the impression...

A. Oh, it was ... you are saying that whether it was founded, the opposition to the Shah ...?

Q. Well

A. The opposition to the Shah primarily had one or two roots, always. One was just suppression, political suppression. I mean, this was a guy to If you wanted to shout -- and sometimes you want to shout in the middle of -- I mean, I want to shout in the middle of the street. So, the only one you could curse was the Shah. That was the highest authority you could curse, anyway.

So the students were opposed to the Shah because of the political structure of the country and because of corruption. These were the two main themes. Beyond that, the criticism that they were saying, really, they didn't have enough information, for example, to criticize the educational system. You never had ... exposed the masses to the intricacies and problems of the educational system.

It was -- if you read the news, it was "His Majesty went today, and opened such a place, or visited such a place." You

ZARGHAMEE-4

never had content with why ... where we are, what we are doing, what are the policies, what are the problems. The problems, policies, procedures, and ... or new innovative schemes were really hidden to the public. And still, I think that still nobody knows what happened at that time.

Q. Yes. It's very (unclear). How did you learn of the students' political sentiments?

A. I had students, a large number of students. I would I mean, my life was in the university, and I talked to them, and I had students who were a couple of my students who were imprisoned, and this sort of thing. I was intimately involved with the students, and I knew all their political thoughts. They would come and discuss it with me, or this, or that.

There were a group of students, for example, who came to me in 1949, and they said, "We want to publish a journal...."

Q. I'm sorry, 1949, you said?

A. Sorry -- that would be 1970. They said, "We want to publish a journal." A few months before that, we were at (a Court ceremony), and the Shah said, "I have come to believe that one of the things that is holding back this country is

ZARGHAMEE-4

censorship. And now that we are embarking on a path of industrialization, etc., we have to develop the people. And we have to stop censoring."

And he came to the university the same year, Aban Azar Day. He said, "Isn't that funny, that this university a few days ago had unrest, and the subject was opposition to the increase in the price of busses. And a few panes of glass were broken. Now, do you really expect that if you put a few thousand students in a university, and you suffocate them, and don't let them express their opposition to an increase in the price of the busses?"

I mean, he accepted in that statement That statement is classical. In the same discussion that the Shah had with the students, he spoke for an hour and a half, without even knowing that he was going to talk. Of course, he said, "We are negotiating to establish OPEC and increase get our share of the oil." But at that time he said that there is nothing wrong with student activism, and the doors of censorship should open.

So the kids came to me and said that they want to open the doors. I said, "Yes, go ahead." So I went to the chancellor. I was at that time Ma'aven-e Daneshkadeh-e Riyazi, vice-chairman of the Math Department. So I went

ZARGHAMEE-4

to the chancellor, and I said, "The students want to write." He said, "Let them write. But tell them" That was the impression he got from the Shah. "But tell them they have to find a faculty (member?), and work under that faculty (member?)."

So I told the students. They said, "What about you?" I said, "No, no, no, I am busy up to here. Go find someone else." They went, and nobody, none of the faculty, volunteered to work with these kids. So the five or six kids, they came to me, and said, "Nobody wants to work with us." I said, "OK, since it's so important to you, I'll drop some of my other work, and I'll do that."

I said, "Write your articles, give them to me, and I'll do as little of censorship that I can. Let's establish some rules: don't curse the Shah, don't do ... "

My God, they went and brought back articles, seven or eight articles, that were, some of them, well-founded, and were so bad for the regime, there was no chance it could be published. I took all the articles to the chancellor. I said, "Hey, we can't publish these!."

One of them had done an analysis of land distribution and all the profiteering that took place by certain individuals, and

ZARGHAMEE-4

the effect it would have on poverty, and this sort of thing. But you couldn't have published that sort of thing in Iran at that time. Regardless of what the Shah said.

So, anyway, we diluted that, and we published the first issue. The day after, ... we made 1000 copies, and it was sold in half an hour. And, anyway, the next time the university Within two or three days the university was in a turmoil. Not for this reason, because it was close to the Twenty-five Hundred Anniversary, and it was ... after ... I talked about that.

And after that, all these five or six people who participated, except one of them, was put in prison. So that showed how much censorship there was. But the Shah was saying that.

Q. Were there students on the other end of the pole, who were interested in, you know, the ideas that the Shah was propagating? Were there students interested, who'd wanted to have a newspaper praising the Shah's regime?

A. The word "praising" ... unless you find unification



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LAJJEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DUBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 28, 1985
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA
INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI
TAPE NO.: 5
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 05

ANIN, MOHAMMAD-REZA

ARYAMEHR TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

CARTER, PRESIDENT JIMMY

CHERIK-KA-YE FADAI-E KHALGH

CORRUPTION, GOVERNMENT MEASURES AGAINST

DEVELOPMENT & ITS IMPACT ON THE POPULATION

GOLDSBORO, KHOSROW

HUMAN RIGHTS

KOJAHEDIN-E KHALGH, SAZMAN

POLITICAL PRISONERS

RASTAKHIZ PARTY

SAVAK & THE UNIVERSITIES

SAVAK ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE SECURITY FIELDS

SAVAK, DEALING WITH POLITICAL OPPONENTS BY THE

SHAH, REGIME OF THE

SHAH, STUDENTS AND THE

SIYAH-KAL

STUDENT PROTESTS & ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS

STUDENTS, ARREST OF

STUDENTS, POLITICAL ROLE OF

TEHRAN UNIVERSITY

TWENTY-FIFTH CENTURY CELEBRATIONS

UNIVERSITY & THE STUDENTS

UNIVERSITY FACULTY, DISSATISFACTION OF

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 05

UNIVERSITY POLICE

05

ZARGHAMEE-5

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghamee

Date: February 28, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape No: 5

Q. Dr. Zarghamee, I wanted to ask you (?) questions (unclear), before we were cut off. Were there students who wanted to write a newspaper praising the Shah's policies?

A. I'm sure that there were students who were pro-regime or did not feel any danger from the direction and the speed of development of Iran and all the political connotations of it. However, if a person does not feel a danger, he is apt to not do anything. In other words, I The political system in Iran did not ... was not so that a person had to really s_e_l_l anything, or defend anything -- the defense of the ideas of the Shah was made by the Shah's regime.

And the open environment wasn't there, so there was no threat. As a result, you didn't have too many students who

would stand up and be counted on the side of the Shah.

If the system were more open, I would imagine that there would have been people who would want to stand up and be counted in that regard. But the need never arose. If anybody screamed, there was the danger of getting caught by SAVAK. I mean, this was more danger than real opposition.

However, there were oppositions amongst the different factions of the dissidents. I mean, there were people who had more religious ideas, as opposed to Marxist ideas -- they were always fighting with each other. But the fighting was conducted in such a way that it was totally obscure to the government. But definitely there were ...

Q. Oppositions...

A. ... a number of occasions in which the oppositions fought, and fought harshly. In fact, I remember that Sharif was a student who -- of Aryamehr University -- and he was a member of Mojahedin, he was very much religious, and he opposed the creeping ... communist idea in the Mojahedin organization, and he was eventually murdered by Mojahedin.

Q. Really?

A. Another student was pushed from the fourth floor of the dormitory of Aryamehr University. He smashed his head on the asphalt and was killed.

Q. Who pushed him?

A. It was never known, although there were students around. They even never cooperated to the extent of finding who did it. But it was definitely -- this incident, like the killing of Sharif -- was politically motivated.

Q. When you say Mojahedin murdered him -- how did they do that? How did they murder him?

A. Well, they took him Sharif was taken ... well, there was a guy, another student, called Shahram ... He wasn't ... I don't believe he was a student of ... Shahram was his last name. Shahram was not a student of Aryamehr University, and he was pushing for Marxist ideology.

And Sharif was a student of Aryamehr University, and he opposed the creeping Marxism, because and also the decision that was being made at that time by Mojaheddin to abandon the Islamic foundation part and go...more and more lean toward Marxism because they somehow felt the danger of leaning too much toward Islam -- the danger that finally

happened to them. I mean, the thing would fall ultimately in the hands of mullahs -- or extremists, Islamic extremists.

And therefore they thought that sometime in the 1970s -- early 1970s -- was the right time to divorce from the Islamic principles and lean more and more toward Marxism. This faced ... this idea faced an opposition ... among some of the factions in the Mojahedin organization. And one of the outspoken members was Sharif, who was murdered by Shahram and others. This became quite clear after the revolution, when Shahram was imprisoned by the regime immediately after the revolution.

Q. So no charges were brought against anybody?

A. Well, they couldn't Well, I don't know No, charges were not brought against Shahram, at least it wasn't known to the regime who had done it. They knew that it was an action of Sazman-e Mojahedin, but they didn't know who had done it. If they would have found Sazman-e Mojahedin members -- I mean, top members -- I think they would have imprisoned or killed them anyway.

Q. (unclear)

A. So, whether it was for the murder of Sharif or not, that

ZARGHAMEE-5

would be immaterial.

Q. Which of the Aryamehr University students who were later in prison or executed did you know personally?

A. I think that there was one student that I knew personally in the sense that I was his faculty adviser, and there were a number of them who were in my classes, and I knew only their faces. The one that I knew personally was -- I think his name was Oloumi -- I know that he was imprisoned.

There was another student who was not a member of Sazman-e Mojahedin, he was just an outspoken critic of the regime -- his name was Etrat. And he was imprisoned ...

Q. Sorry, what was his name?

A. Etrat. He was imprisoned for several years.

There were a large number of other students who were imprisoned for shorter time periods. There were ... amongst them is Ebrahim Hendinejad, who was in prison for a few months -- and I knew him relatively well. He ... was niece, or nephew of Khomeini. And there were others who were members of the Mojahedin organization or they were compatriots of ... not necessarily an active member, but they

had ... supporting feelings toward them.

I would say altogether I probably knew about ten of such persons, who were either imprisoned or killed.... I am just thinking about the name of a person who was Kermani, and he went to ... he carried a bomb to the Kourosh Department Store, and somehow the bomb exploded in his hands in the bathroom ... I think he may have been hesitant whether to place ... plant that bomb or not. And finally he was severely damaged, and imprisoned afterwards.

Q. Could you describe some of these individuals? I mean, (unclear)

A. By and large they were not outspoken. The ones that I am specifically referring to the terrorist members of the Mojahedin or Fada'ayan.

First of all, Aryamehr University didn't have ... I don't think that they had a lot of members of the Fada'ayan organization. Whatever ... Whoever I knew there were belonging to the Mojahedin organization. By and large, ... they were ... introvert ... they did not mingle well with other students, even. They rarely attended class, at least toward the end of the time of their capture. I mean, Olouni's first year maybe he was a OK student, but later on

ZARGHAMEE-5

he became ... you felt a depression in their ..., or a depression feeling in their attitudes.

They were very much eager to pass the courses, so they came toward the end of the course, and they wanted to get a grade, and take the exams, and this sort of thing. And I had the policy that I wanted to see the student all through the year, and usually I ended up talking to these people: "Where were you? Why didn't you take the interim exams? Where are your homeworks?" And this sort of thing. And he would answer in a confused, lost way that you would know that here we go again.

And ... Somebody from Berkeley made a -- this was he during the late 1960s-early 1970s -- made a distinction between two groups of ... between various students by dividing them according to whether they had psychological or social alienation. By psychological alienation, he means somebody who is not ... who has feelings of loneliness, of inability, powerlessness, etc, etc. By social alienation, he means somebody who doesn't agree with the trends, pace, or direction that the society is developing.

A number of students were socially alienated, and they used to sit down and talk and discuss, and they wanted to actively participate in everything, and they wanted to improve the

ZARGHAMEE-5

society. You would see them as they spoke. They were against the government, or against the direction that the country was going. But at their heart there was an idea for development.

There were other students who were psychologically alienated. They were either withdrawn from the society, or they were terrorists when they became extremely socially alienated as well. It was probably a result of their upbringing, or because of the shattering of their value-system in the rapidly-developing society of Iran.

What was happening in Iran was this: that the entire value-systems of the students, especially those that came from the more remote places, were being changed.... And a kid who had come from a small town, and had sort of a religious upbringing ... and came necessarily from a poor family, he saw the lavish (_e_l_c) of the Tehran, and he saw all the corruption. And he saw even girls and boys going out on dates. He couldn't digest that. And he definitely felt there was something wrong with him. He couldn't possibly mix with this society. Where are the principles? And he was He -- at the same time he was being attracted to these, and he had to resist. And there was this tremendous fight within his inner system.

ZARGHAMEE-5

Now, add to that some social alienation -- a lot of social alienation -- and you would have your terrorist. And they were very withdrawn. They did not talk even to their fellow students, etc. etc. At the same time I can also see that they had much higher things in mind They knew that they were going to lose their lives on that. I mean, that's a big decision, and I can see why you would get depressed, or....

Now which one came first? Was there social and psychological alienation that led into terrorists, or was it really getting into terrorism, and then by nature you become psychologically and socially alienated, I don't know. But what I saw was a manifestation, that was clear to me, of social and psychological alienation simultaneously.

But, by and large, the students who had social alienation, they developed into ordinary ... people in Iran. I mean, they would criticize, etc, and then they graduate and find a job in Plan Organization, this place, this company, that company.... And they would lead a normal life. The people who had extreme psychological alienation, you would know something is going to go wrong.

Q. If we may take a concrete example -- let's take Oloumi. All these characteristics you mentioned would have fit Oloumi, or {unclear}...?

A. Yeh. I think Oloumi ... Oloumi would fit that ... Oloumi would fit psychological alienation. In the first year, he was normal. In the second year, he was withdrawn. In the first year, that he was normal, he really came from a poor family. He had religious background and upbringing. And he had problems in the first year, but he coped with those problems in some way. In the second year, he was really withdrawn.

By the beginning of the third year, I heard that he was involved in one of those incidents that led either to his arrest or Anyway, he was involved in some sort of a terrorist activity, and then he was captured and Later on, I heard that he wasn't captured.... But anyway, we knew that we had lost Oloumi. It was just a matter of time when he would be captured, murdered or killed.

Q. Was there an organization within Aryamehr University that was ... that would recruit these students? I mean, how did the students

A. I have to answer you by guessing. I would say that the students who belonged to ... Mojahedin organization would have a technique of expanding their organization, essentially would be looking for the people who have social and

ZARGHAMEE-5

psychological alienation, who would join them. And I think that the way that it was done -- it was done very gradually by asking them first to gather in such a place and scream against government. I mean, one of the demonstrations. Now demonstrations were very confined demonstrations. But it was announced in the day before in specific places.

And secondly, they were maybe given a ... bunch of literature to distribute or place in certain places that it would be picked up by the other students. And, once ... they developed a trust in him, and involved him with various activities, I think gradually they would absorb him into the organization. But I can see that in order for somebody to really become absorbed into the organization at that time, it would have taken many months or years of hard work until they would qualify. The initiation would not be that easy. I mean, they couldn't recruit on a short-term basis.

Q. Approximately how many Aryamehr University students were at one time or another imprisoned or executed?

A. Well, you have to distinguish between the two. I have to say that there were two kinds of imprisonment in Iran. One imprisonment ... one form of imprisonment was associated with ... non-terrorist groups. It was mainly a technique of the government in order to ... show to the average students that

ZARGHAMEE-5

you shouldn't really go after the terrorists.

Essentially if there was a meeting, and if one of these kids were available, or if they knew that this guy has some books, or has some pamphlets or literature, these sort of things, they may go to his house and arrest him. Usually such arrests were for a short period of time. Many students got arrested in this way, or by mass-arrest in demonstrations inside the campus.

I know that after a demonstration in 1950 (1350=1971) I was selected by the faculty to go and see if any of the kids were ... lost their lives. And this was after a severe beating that was given to the students of Aryamehr University that year, about a month after the Siyahkal event. I went with the permission of Ra'is-e ((chief of) police)

At that time I was working with Dr. Reza Amia, who was chancellor of the university. I was in charge of a newly-formed Office of Planning and Development. Anyway, I went I was elected by the faculty, and permission was obtained by the chancellor, and I visited the prison where several hundred students were kept temporarily, for a few days. And afterwards, they released the students. They went home.

ZARGHAMEE-5

Anyway, in that event, we had about one-fourth of the student body inside prison.

When I became chancellor, I requested the names of all the kids who had, in some manner, not attended. And the list came out, and it was again a couple of hundred.

Q. Not attended classes?

A. Not attended classes. Well, some of them may have left for Europe, but, by and large, they would have been in prison or something like that. So there were a couple of hundred. But gradually they came back. From 1975 to 1977, we had a return from prison.

Apparently what happened must have been something like this: that sometime in 1975 -- this is the same year that the Shah declared the Rastakhiz Party -- they gathered a lot of people and put [them] in prison. And later on, from 1975, when they also passed a law of ... the law was this: that if somebody is accused of some offense, in the judgment of the Attorney General, his sentence can be increased by three-fold according ... so that ... social problem, or whatever problem that they have would be dealt with. As a result, ... previously you would get three years in prison then for insulting the Shah, now it was changed to ten years. It was

ZARGHAMEE-5

horrible!

But ... something happened as a result of that. The phenomenon that happened was this: that they had a large number of people in prison that they were keeping almost indefinitely because of this triple factor. And if a guy was two years or three years or four years, which was previously considered a short imprisonment, it was changed to six years, nine years, twelve years! This was enormous!

Then ... sooner or later, they stopped ... the government almost ... the SAVAK stopped ... gathering people in that manner. No more people were captured as before. Now that may be associated with Carter and human rights and this sort of thing, I know, but also they had picked up a stone too large for them to be able to throw it. So they'd collected all those people -- I think they must have run out of space -- I mean, physical space. And just management of the prisons ... Anyway -- that must have been a problem.

But anyway, the Shah, after ... in 1976-77, claimed that there were only 3,000 political prisoners. If his number was correct, then at that time, 1975, he must have about 200, 250 of them, probably belonged to Aryamehr University, which is somewhere around 8 to 10% of the Well, that shows how important, maybe, Aryamehr University was. But toward the

ZARGHAMEE-S

end of my time as chancellor, I think the number had dropped down significantly.

Amongst the second category were those that were actively pursuing terrorism. I mean, those who really wanted to kill and die. And I would say there weren't that many of them -- probably 10, 12, 15 that I would know that they lost their lives. Something of that nature. Or were in prison. But such imprisonments were equivalent to losing lives. Or, even if it wasn't equivalent, I'm categorizing it as such. It wasn't for having D_e_s__K_a_p_i_t_a_l_. I mean, on your shelf.

Q. If you think you have answered some of these questions, please don't (unclear)

A. I really can't tell you because I don't know. I have a feeling that I've answered all of these questions, but because of the tape problem I can't distinguish whether I answered it or not. So you may have redundancy. I apologize for redundancy, but that's your fault also.

Q. That's right. Absolutely.

Well, here. This is one of those questions which is (unclear), but I'm going to ask you again anyway.

ZARGHAMEE-5

A. OK.

Q. And we'll see what we can do with it.

How much did you know about the alleged crimes or the trials?

A. Nothing. We knew that these people were I mean, the people that Well, let me go back and

I discussed that there were two groups of people who were in prison. One of them I would consider as people who had attended several meetings, or they had read a book, or this sort of thing. It was an imprisonment as a part of the repressiveness of the regime, extended to the individual. I knew, by and large, that these people, by any definition, they were innocent. And everybody considered them innocent, and were happy that these people would get out. You would do everything possible to obtain the release of these individuals.

The second group are those that were actively involved in terrorism. I think that ... We didn't know what these students were doing. We didn't know what was their accusation or what they were accused of. And we didn't know how the court proceedings went. But we would have We would know that these people ... if these people had received

ZARGHAMEE-5

their sentence, we would know of the sentence. If it was imprisonment. If it wasn't imprisonment, I don't know. Probably we would never hear about it.

Q. You mean, if it was execution?

A. If it was execution.... I don't think that there were that many kids who were executed. With the exception of Golsorkhi and others, execution following an official sentence was something relatively remote. Several people who were executed were those that they proved some sort of a ... either belonged to the Golsorkhi group, or they proved that these people participated in killing somebody. The rest of them were killed in action.

Or -- they had other stories also, that But sometimes they even never explained! I heard of one incident, and this incident was something like this: that one of these kids was on the campus, and I heard a strange story that, suddenly, a SAVAK agent that was trailing this guy, who was also on the campus -- how, I don't know, because we used to check everybody's ID cards when they entered the university -- suddenly started chasing him. And then shot and killed him in a street next to the university.

This action took place in such a speed, and the body was

removed I heard this from one of the usual guards of the university who stands in front of the door. It was never in the paper. I was never informed of it. Nothing happened. So, I don't know. I don't have a good idea about what would happen to such a person.

But those who did select to join the terrorist organizations, I think they knew what would happen to them. I mean, this was something We were not at all involved with what happened to them or how they are dealt with.

Q. What were the sentiments of the faculty and administration of Aryamehr University when arrests or executions of their students became known?

A. Again, I have to distinguish between the two. The arrest has two parts. One part has to do with the first group, which I don't consider really an accusation of any form. I mean, the guy had a book, or participated in a meeting, or something of this nature, which wouldn't be considered a crime in the West. Toward the first there was a tremendous feeling of compassion. The faculty wanted the students released, etc, etc.

The second group, which are the terrorists, essentially, the faculty had a feeling that these people, well, they knew what

ZARGHAMEE-5

they were doing. And, by and large, there wasn't that much feeling of compassion towards them. They said that these people have selected to pick up arms, they are killing, and they know that they are going to get killed. Of course, some of the ways that ... or the stories that existed about torture, etc, didn't create also a feeling of compassion toward the regime.

But you have to make a distinction between the arrest that is made on a kid because he happens to have a book that his teacher has got it also on his shelf... Every guy who goes back, there are two or three books on his shelf, that if SAVAK would have come, would have considered them to be

_k_e_t_a_b_h_a_y_-_e___m_o_z_e_r_r_e_-_h {undesirable books} and the guy would be

subject to arrest. So I would say that the faculty had this dual feeling.

But by and large the faculty was really ... didn't have a feeling of distance between them and the students.... And ... because 90%, 95% of the arrests were of the first kind, therefore they had an anti-government sentiment in this regard. And the feeling was leaning more toward the student who got arrested.

Q. That brings me to, in fact, the next question, which is very much related. Was the topic ever discussed in a formal

ZARGHAMEE-S

or informal meetings? By the faculty?

A. Yes, in one case. In one case it was discussed. But usually, by and large, you couldn't have discussion. I mean, the subject, if it came up, it came up informally rather than formally. The one occasion was that in 1950 (1350-1971), after the police came inside the university and gave a beating to all the students and the faculty.

I mean, the faculty at Aryamehr University was very young. I mean, it was just a few years older than the students. So the police couldn't distinguish them, so when they came and started beating everybody, some of the professors also got a baton or two. At that time, there was a meeting of all the faculty members, a sort of general ... and the topic came up, and as a result of that all the faculty resigned. Submitted resignation.

I was out of town. When I came the next day, I was selected as I was elected by faculty to go and try to find out who was killed. Because the students were saying that a large number of bodies were taken out of the university.

And that's obvious, because whenever there is an attack by the police, a lot of people faint. They just faint. It's not a pleasant sight. You see a guy, for example, with

ZARGHAMEE-S

helmet and everything, coming toward you, and ... especially women faint. Some of the boys even they're young! Only 17, 18, 19! They faint. Or some of them, even, they have concussion when they faint. So they saw a large number of bodies, anyway.

I was.... The students were all in black. And I went after the students, to hospitals, and houses, etc, etc.... in order to locate everybody. Anyway, I located everybody. Fortunately nobody was killed. But this was ... in this time I got the chance to go inside the prison and ... which I talked about before.

Q. OK. What was the origin of the establishment of the university police or Guard-e Daneshgahi? Who controlled the guard? What was their organizational relation to the chancellor and the ministry of higher education?

A. The guards ... university guards were established in 1950 (1350=1971) immediately after this famous meeting at the Aryamehr University.

Q. I'm sorry, you mean 1350.

A. Sorry, 1350. After this meeting. Because this was the year that a number of things happened. Number one: Siyahkal

ZARGHAMEE-S

was formed. Number two: both at Tehran University and Aryamehr University -- Aryamehr University more -- there were severe beatings for the students after they demonstrated against the Shah and for Siyahkal Group. It was the year the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Shahanshahi was to be conducted. Anyway, the anniversary was in the fall, but they had to tighten the system, essentially ... for the fall occasion.

And the terrorists started opposing the anniversary show, and in fact the terrorists really became active in that year.

In that year, in the summer of that year, in Ramsar, there was an annual conference in Ramsar, in which all the high administration of the university participated ... with government and the Shah himself. The Shah proposed the establishment of a guard. I was under the impression that somebody in the ministry of higher education made the proposition. And they wanted to prevent this clash between police and students, so they said: "Why not just put the police inside?" And anyway, the Shah liked the idea. Anyway, it was inserted into the ... conference -- what do you call it?

Q. Agenda?

A. Agenda. It wasn't discussed. But anyway the conclusion

ZARGHAMEE-S

was put in after the Shah got angry because it wasn't in the ... it wasn't amongst one of the conclusions.

Anyway, in that year it was established. It said that the guard is going to operate under the direction of the chancellor. But they had their own authority spelled out. That means that it wasn't Although it was really ... I had the authority, supposedly, to ask them to leave the university at a certain point, or "Go over there!" or "Do this!" or "Do that!" It wasn't at all clear ... in fact it was ... it wasn't clear that I was their commander. Of course, they had a commander. I mean, their military commander was somebody who was stationed at the University of Tehran.

And when the university needed more force, instead of bringing people from the police force or ... which were not accustomed to dealing with students, they wanted to have a group of police or guards that were accustomed to the student activity and this sort of thing. And they would be well-equipped. They were not armed. There were no firearms at all in their hands or in their possession.

They had ... usually they had nothing to do with the arrest of the students. They were primarily there to prevent mass-demonstrations.

ZARGHAMEE-5

Q. The students' mass-demonstrations?

A. The students' mass-demonstrations. When I was chancellor, I remember once I I was opposed to their existence. I don't believe that the university site is holy and no police should enter it. That wasn't the reason of my opposition. I was opposed to it because I was ... this was by itself sort of a ... it would be able to (provoke?) unrest very easily. All you had to do is to shout something. They would become ... I mean they would go on alert.

And you would throw a stone or something to a guy -- I mean, one of these police -- and he would start chasing you. Once a policeman starts chasing a kid, the whole university is on the run! This was ... you could disrupt classes in no time if you wanted! And the police could never catch up with the guy in sneakers and these sort of things.

The kid who was going to do that, he was wearing sneakers. He was capable of running -- loose clothes. And the police had all these heavy stuff with them, boots and this sort of thing. So the student would lose himself in the masses of the other students. What would remain in the university was a large number of kids who have escaped from the guard, and the guard is essentially symbolizing the regime. And that

ZARGHAMEE-S

wasn't ... that wouldn't create any pleasant feelings among the students. And you could disrupt classes. And I was against that ... and opposed to that.

Anyway, when I wrote ... when I called the commander and I asked him: "Please leave, and don't enter unless I ask you," he said, "I can leave, but I can't stay out." I said, "Well, leave then." And I asked him to leave. And a few days later he came with a letter. He says that "I can't leave. You have to sign this letter that anything that goes wrong is your fault." And I signed that letter, and that letter must be somewhere. That I accept all responsibilities, and you just get the ... get out, whenever I tell you.

Later on, after the revolution, one of the kids, who was in charge of Komite-h at Aryamehr University, called me and said "Do you know such a student, called Farhang Darvishrou'i?" And I said, "Yea." He said, "He was a member of SAVAK." I said, "OK, so what's new?" He said that he was under direction at the time that you had asked the police, the guard, to leave the campus. He was under the direction to create disruption and tear down laboratories and this sort of thing.

Q. (unclear)

ZARGHAMEE-5

A. So that, well ... they must have had some interest in the sense that they wanted to show to other universities that, if you do this, then you are going to suffer the consequences. Anyway, that's what happened. That means ... SAVAK was acting essentially in a direction which was opposite to the direction of the chancellor. This is very funny. I don't know who was working for whom.

Q. Was there actually unrest during the time when you asked the guard to leave?

A. Yes. When I asked the (?) guard to leave, I know that the opposition, the extremists, the terrorist groups, etc, they easily felt the danger, that is.... I mean, if the guard was out, there would have been a compassionate feeling or there would be a sort of pro-government feeling, or pro-university feeling which would propagate amongst the students. And this was not good for that. So what they did -- they started a series of actions that sort of escalated in order to demonstrate their opposition, and entice me to bring back the guard.

It's very funny, but I get the feeling -- or I always had the feeling, that the SAVAK and the terrorists were made of the same material. They were the same fabric, only cut in half. Half of them were put in charge of controlling, and the other

ZARGHAMEE-S

half in charge of the ... in charge of opposing to that extent.

And, anyway, these series of actions included actually stoning my office, included breaking ... enormous amount of breaking windows and glasses in order to disrupt the university. The university did not disrupt. The students sat in the class. And they were going to ... they were going to disrupt the examinations, and the students sat in the exam. Until the students actually kicked these activists out of the class. They said, "Just leave!" And they wanted to ... they said....

The students wanted to finish and graduate. Every time that there was disruption The university had passed a regulation that the 16 weeks of education had to be delivered. That means disruption of classes doesn't mean that that part of the course would not be covered -- the term would be extended until you cover all that. And in order to not lose the rhythm, we said that if the extension was more than a certain amount we are going to lose that term altogether. So the students wanted to stay, and the other ... (telephone rang)

to force them to leave classes. And they didn't want that.

ZARGHAMEE-5

So the activists sort of escalated. They broke all the windows. They shattered laboratories. They destroyed libraries. But, finally they gave up.

Q. Were the activists Mojahedin?

A. They were pro-Mojahedin. They were Usually what happens is this, that the real Mojahedin were in the back. They would get some of these groups who have been recruited, and then they form them into activist groups that would go and do things for them. They were, I would say, the workers ... of the hierarchy of Mojahedin. They were not the real, sort of thinker-Mojahedin.

Q. If I may go back to one comment you made just a few minutes ago about SAVAK working against the chancellor and who was working for whom. What was the extent of the SAVAK activity within the university? How much were you aware -- or the chancellor was aware of what?

A. There was one thing that I was aware, and that was the Personnel Office had to submit the name of every applicant and special application to SAVAK for clearance, unless that person was being employed on a short-term basis. So we had a number of people who were employed at Aryamehr University who otherwise would not be by ... as temporary help, not as

ZARGHAMEE-5

permanent.

Usually they would take the name of a person, and then they would state that this guy had some activities abroad. And then ... we would ... I would convey ... I mean, that message would be conveyed by our Personnel Office to me. I would talk to the chairman of the department, and the chairman of the department would say that we really need that person. So I asked personnel to prepare a letter to them, that we really need that person.

And upon ... receipt of a letter that says I am responsible The chancellor says, "I am responsible," they would permit the university to hire that person. There were only a few occasions that they really violently disagreed.

Anyway, that was one activity. A second activity of SAVAK was totally unknown to us: what they were doing with students. Either the students were working for them, or the students were working against them. I mean, that part was totally unknown to us. And we had no way of even knowing what they wanted to do.

In fact, many of the otherwise, I would say, natural trends, like the formation of that union, etc. it was associated with SAVAK. They said, "Hey, this is the mechanism that they are

ZARGHAMEE-5

setting up in order to do this or do that." There was much more ... activities were ... associated with SAVAK than really involved SAVAK. But we were ignorant of the activities of SAVAK inside.

Then the third was official contacts of SAVAK with the university in which they would come and they would have a I mean, a representative of SAVAK would come and would say something. And usually the stuff that they were saying was

I met a guy who came once and said that they wanted ... they had information that one of the ... such-and-such person, who was not really a member of the faculty, was engaged in corrupt activities. And I said, "What is the activity?" He said, "Dr. Such-and-such (I don't want to mention his name), he made a firm and he obtained representation from another company, and he's buying the material from his own firm." So he would get -- in a way, he would get kick-back.

Anyway, we told them that that person was not associated with Aryamehr University, and was now in another organization. Anyway, that never prevented the progress of that corrupt individual, because he just went on and on....

But that was, for example, the type of official visits that

ZARGHAMEE-5

they would have. I mean, it was a member who would come and say something like this, or ... very similar It looks like an aspect of the work is ... of the university -- of SAVAK -- was like the FBI in this country, and was very overt, as opposed to covert activities. And the overt activities is what I call as official.

Q. But during the time that you were, either as professor at Aryamehr University, or as the chancellor, were you aware of SAVAK activities, and did you feel they were working against you? Against you in the office?

A. I think that there was First of all, I was aware of the SAVAK activities because of so many arrests of the innocent students. And I was feeling that SAVAK is As a faculty member, I was feeling that SAVAK is working ... I mean, whatever SAVAK stands for is essentially against my principles. But at the same time, I accepted the existence of SAVAK. I mean, that's SAVAK.

When I was chancellor, I didn't think that SAVAK was working for me or against me. I mean, definitely I would say that they were so remote of the intricate problems of a university that they weren't working for me. They had their own roles, and this sort of thing.

ZARGHAMEE-5

They never worked Also, I wasn't ... I wouldn't really imagine that they would be working against me, because I thought that ... This is stuff, I told you, it really came up after the revolution, and after I was released from jail.

Q. So, in other words, they were working against the office of the chancellor, but that (unclear)....

A. At least in this instance I don't know, but ... they had their own purposes and their own goals, and their own activities were geared to those goals and principles, etc. And definitely their concern was not proper functioning of the university. That was my problem -- whether educational research was done properly or not. They wanted quiet, I suppose.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LAJJEVARDI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DUBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 28, 1985
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA
INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI
TAPE NO.: 6
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 06

ANIN, MOHAMMAD-REZA

ANDUZEGAR, JANSID, AS PRIME MINISTER

ARYANEMR TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BAKHTIAR, CHAPBIR

BAZARGAN, MEHDI, AS PRIME MINISTER

COPPER INDUSTRY

ECONOMICS, HIGH COUNCIL OF

KOJAHEDIN-E KHALGH, SAZMAN

NATURAL RESOURCES IN IRAN

PRIVATE SECTOR/INVESTMENT

REVOLUTION OF 1979

REVOLUTION, EVENTS PRECEDING

SAVAK

SHAH, ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE

SHAH, RULE & ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE OF THE

SHARIATMADARI, AYATOLLAH MOHAMMAD-KAZEM

SOUTH AFRICA

UNITED STATES, PERSONNEL FROM THE

ZARGHAMEE-6

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghamee

Date: February 28, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape no: 6

Q. Please go ahead.

A. I think I am finished with that answer.

Q. OK.

I think this question, again, was asked in another context, but I'd still like to discuss it with you. How and why were you removed from Aryamehr University?

A. As I told you, the reason for my removal from Aryamehr University was because ... the government of Mr. Hoveida had changed, and the government of Amouzegar had come on board. And the government of Amouzegar wanted to undo some of the, sort of ... complex situations that had been created at the

ZARGHAMEE-6

time of Hoveida.

One of those complex situations was, really, with the faculty of Aryamehr University, because of the position that Hoveida had on not increasing the salaries, and the ... sort of, I'd say, Komiteh-e Refah (Committee of Welfare) union, the student union activities that were going on, and the clash of ideology between me and a number of other faculty members with those in the union, and not having any other course for resolution of the problem. All contributed to the fact that ... I mean, the government of Amouzegar decided that the best solution is to remove me.

And I was glad, really glad, of that decision. I mean, you don't know how glad I was!

Q. Now I'm going to change the subject from Aryamehr University to National Iranian Copper Industry. What was your first impression, as the new Managing Director, of the National Iranian Copper Industry? Now, I'm going to read you some of the categories. Regarding, one, the validity of the concept of a copper industry, for you.

A. OK. Iran has a sizable reservoir of copper ore. And wherever there is a resource, a natural resource, the concept is valid. Now the only question that can be asked in this

ZARGHAMEE-6

regard is whether this valid concept of developing industry in Iran -- should it really be done in the form of a nationalized industry, or should it be given to the private sector?

The history of the private sector in Iran essentially is reflective of this fact, that the private sector was primarily interested in making a profit. And they would bring in a foreign firm to do all the exploitation and this sort of thing. And the real structure of cooperation between Iran and that foreign country would not be geared toward the future development of an industrialized Iran.

For this reason, it was decided that it would be done in a nationalized form. I didn't really have disagreement with the nationalization. There were aspects that I disagreed. Usually in Iran, whenever you could get away with a Chevette you end up building the Cadillac -- that's the problem. It could have been done slightly ... smaller in scale, but that wasn't the plan as initially drawn.

Anyway, I think that I can answer you essentially that I agreed with the validity of the concept of a nationalized Iranian copper industry.

Q. OK. Now, what about the competence of the previous

ZARGHAMEE-6

managing directors?

A. The managing directors by and large were competent people. The only problem that is really here to address is this: Who were the Iranians? And I'm not talking about expatriates, but who were the Iranians who were assisting them?

At the time that I joined the National Iranian Copper Industry, their ... plant was half-complete, or less than half-complete. In one year and a half that I was there, I pushed it as far as I could, so that, by the revolution, essentially, by the outbreak of the revolution, it was 97% -- 98% complete. And, well, now it is operating, I heard that. It's operating at one-quarter of capacity because they have taken a lot of -- what do you call it -- cannibalized one set in order to make the other set operational.

The thing that was clear was lack of qualified Iranian technical people. I mean, that was something that hit me right in the face. Non-technical people, which is in the support, like accounting, and this sort of thing, were phenomenal! Real good set-up. Because both Mr. Niazmand and Mr. Tavakoli, who were previously managing directors of this company, they ... set up a ... nice administrative system. And they employed people who were qualified to do the work.

ZARGHAMEE-6

However, technically, at the time of Niazmand, Niazmand was relying primarily on Anaconda to provide the expatriates who would assist him. Anaconda never provided the group of people that Niazmand had in mind

Q. I'm sorry, what was that name?

A. Anaconda. That's Anaconda Copper.

And Tavakoli came from Tabriz Machine Manufacturing Plant. He really didn't have anybody. I mean, he didn't come from a background of... responsible bureaucratic operations like National Iranian Oil Company, that he could draw a lot of technical experts from. He essentially came from Tabriz. He brought two or three of the people who were working with him at that time. Most of them were not ... were very eager, but not capable of doing much.

Q. How about the competence of the company's management and staff?

A. I think altogether it was relatively ... in the framework of Iran, with the exception of technical expertise, again, ... it comprised of a group of highly-motivated and ... qualified people. I brought in some people, also. I tried

ZARGHAMEE-6

to build technical ... I mean manpower. And both in the operation, engineering, research, and this sort of area. But those were the areas that were primarily lacking. Otherwise I think that, especially in the accounting and financial matters, in the contractual domain, etc, there were a hierarchy of good people there.

Q. Whether the foreign contractors and experts took sufficient notice of Iran's national interests?

A. Well, let's look at it from different groups who were involved. One group was the contractor. The contractor was (?) and Parsons. And I think they are, I think, the second-largest construction firm in the United States. They make their money by building plants outside of the United States. And they are in the business of making money and building. The national interests of the country is none of their concern. It is the responsibility of the country that deals with them to save their shirt.

The second group, of technical people were expatriates, who came from Anaconda. There was a sort of a management contract was signed with Anaconda, after Anaconda was expelled from Chile, following Allende's takeover. And the contract said something like this: that you help us send expatriates, Anaconda expatriates, who are being released

ZARGHAMEE-6

from Chile, to Iran, and we'll pay their salaries according to the US ... basis of the US salary, we will pay 25% extra to them to come to Iran. And we'll provide housing for them at the mine. And something like that.

Anyway, they had to pay Iranian taxes and American taxes simultaneously, so I think an additional stipulation was made in order to provide for them the necessary funds so they would not be double-taxed. But that part of Iranian tax was going back to the government of Iran. I mean, that was ... another factor. So, essentially an American would get 25% extra pay for coming to Iran.

The salaries were moderate. I mean a very high-caliber guy would get somewhere around \$3000, \$3500 a month salary. This includes the 25%. Which is -- really at that it was the type of salaries that you would see here in this country. And also, at the same time, it was hard to find an Iranian with the same salary converted with 7 toman. I mean, 20,000 toman salary to go to Sarcheshmeh, between Sirjan and Rafsanjan -- it wasn't that easy.

Iranians that we ended up hiring were almost being paid the same sort of salaries. But ... I mean, of the same caliber. So it wasn't that the Americans were getting special treatment. (This is just on the side.)

These people were supposedly the high technical people that would come, and they would be seconded, or seconding an Iranian. That means, I was supposed to have a head of engineering, and I would bring somebody from Anaconda and I would put (him) as head of engineering, to work in parallel with this guy, so that after a couple of years, that this guy leaves, you would have a head of engineering with some experience of this American ...

This is what was in the contract. What the previous management of the copper industry had not done was to find an Iranian and put him there, who would be qualified enough to become a head of engineering. You see what I am saying?

Q. Yes.

A. Therefore, if the American did or did not do his job properly, it would be of no consequence because ... the Iranian wasn't there to absorb it. And that was the part I am saying I tried to restructure it. I tried to minimize the number of expatriates and tried to get the key Iranian positions filled up.

The only part that was really operating properly was the mine, which had an Iranian in charge of it. And there were

ZARGHAMEE-6

some expatriates, but the expatriates were working under the Iranian.

I reorganized everything, because the organizations that they had drawn were awful.

Q. You mean, the ...

A. The foreigners, the expatriates.

Q. The expatriates? American expatriates?

A. American expatriates, primarily.

Then, the ... because it was getting expensive getting people from Anaconda -- I think the previous administration, which was at the time of Mr. Tavakoli -- they decide to go to South Africa and hire, in the free market, people, and bring [them] to Iran. To South Africans, the same guy with a \$3000, or \$4000 salary, would be hired from South Africa with \$1000 to \$2000 salary.

In fact, we had a number of expatriates from South Africa who were hired with a \$700 salary! It wasn't such a high

Which we wouldn't find even a j_o_u_s_h_k_a_r_-e_I_r_a_n_i (Iranian welder) to be able to ... a welder to be able to place at the

ZARGHAMEE-6

same position.

But anyway, after the revolution, all those people left.

By and large, I would say, to respond to your question, I would say that whatever It wasn't the doing of the expatriates if we did not get enough from them, it was because of our inaction.

Q. When you say "our inaction," do you mean that it was not organizationally planned well by their?

A. It was organizationally planned well, but it was never implemented well. I mean, you had in the plan the fact that you would second this person ... this expatriate would second an Iranian. The Iranian wasn't there, and he was operating. Or they gave the guy who was supposed to be the head of engineering an Iranian who was so feeble and who was really not qualified, so that these guys really became p_a_-l_d_o_w (flunkies) of the Americans.

And what I did -- I tried to change that -- sort of structure the personnel so that Then I demanded that they were supposed to conduct -- Anaconda was supposed to conduct training programs to train the operators, and this sort of thing. And I sent 100 people to Anaconda. I sent several

ZARGHAMEE-6

... no ... I sent about 100 people, 100 operators I selected from the Kerman area who had some technical background, diploma, etc, and I sent them to America. I sent them to South Africa. For training.

South Africa was extremely cooperative at that time. I think Iran was one of the only countries that smiled to them, so they were willing to do anything. Whatever we asked, we had a request, from the South African government, they were more than happy to accomodate.

Q. Do you mean that the structure was there except that the Iranians didn't know how to use it? Or that you restructured?

A. No. They were so busy, probably, the previous managing directors were so busy that this was not on top of their priority. Or, you can also consider this fact, that it was very hard at that time to find especially -- this is 1974-75 -- to find qualified technical people in Iran ... who would really assume responsibilities that The physical plant wasn't there.

Remember: Iran didn't have many engineers. All the engineers that we had were young graduates, so you wouldn't be able to find anybody with some experience in engineering of a large

ZARGHAMEE-6

physical plant or factory. Or complex factory, with metallurgy, mining, material handling -- all of these things -- in enormous scale.

What happened as a result? Well, it was hard to fill such positions.

Q. On the whole, were these foreign contracts necessary and beneficial for Iran?

A. The foreign contracts that you are referring to -- the construction contracts -- they are the only people who can do the job. I mean, when you look at construction of a plant, Iran didn't have at that time even enough contractors to do civil work. And for much of civil work in Iran, they had to bring in contractors from abroad.

However, I would say that, with hindsight, I could have done it differently, in the sense that I could have done a lot of ... I could have participated more actively in the administration of the construction, if I were there from the beginning. The construction management was primarily left at the beginning to the American firm with Iran picking up the tab.

At my time, we were actively involved with them. In fact, we

ZARGHAMEE-6

were getting ... they had to provide us with proforma invoices, and we would check that, and this sort of thing. It was a lot of interaction going on. It may have slowed down the construction a little bit. Otherwise we may have been able to go faster. But I don't believe in that. I mean, when there was something we had to do, we did it very quickly.

By and large, Iranians are very good in construction. If we had to do it now, the situation is different. At that time, we didn't have many engineers. Now, we have about a three times larger number of engineers, in Iran even.

Q. When you say, "at that time," how long ... when was this?

A. 1974. The population of engineers in Iran underwent a significant change. In 1968 -- or 66 actually -- there were only 11,000 engineers in the entire country. This is all areas. If the revolution had not taken place, and all the engineers that we had generated would remain in the country with the same pace, we would have close to 70,000 to 100,000 engineers now. But even in 1974, it had increased to around 20,000, or something like that. The engineers were not that many.

The influx of engineers really started around '74. They came

ZARGHAMEE-6

back to Iran. And the engineering schools started producing in larger numbers. Otherwise, before that, in the '50s and '60s, there were only one or two or three schools that they used to take a limited number of students every year, and graduate three-quarters of them, and lose the rest. By attrition.

Q. Were these contracts signed on a purely technical and business basis. Or were there political or other considerations involved?

A. The one contract I was involved with was the contract with Krupp and Machine for the refinery. Copper refinery. This ... the contract was put on bid after Anaconda prepared the documents through a ... consulting engineering firm, I think. The bidding documents. It went on bid. It specified what sort of plant, and these sort of things, we wanted.

I remember some international companies participated in the bid. There were essentially two competing bids. One of them belonged to a, sort of a ... a consortium of American and Japanese. And the other one was another consortium of Belgian and Krupp. It was recommended by Mr. Tavakoli to the economic council -- High Economic Council -- that we sign the contract with Krupp and Machine Consortium. And His Majesty agreed. The difference in price was relatively a few million

ZARGHAMEE-6

dollars only.

The basis of that agreement was this: that what were ... the thing that Krupp and Machine were giving us was slightly better than what the American and It was slightly more expensive -- about two or three million dollars -- but the Shah argued that we own 25% of Krupp. And as a result some of the interest gets back to us. So, it was given to Krupp.

Based only on technical considerations, the two were sort of a toss-up. I mean, it wasn't one of them much better than the other. When I became the managing director of the company, I knew that I had to sign the contract with Krupp and Machine.

I gathered a group of technical people, and I hired somebody -- this person was also hired from before -- a fantastic lawyer. He was an American lawyer who was both an electrical engineer and a lawyer -- a contract lawyer. Very smart. And we negotiated one month, day and night, every sentence, every phrase, etc.

After the revolution, it was declared that that's one of the best contracts ... that was signed. But it was purely technical. At no time I was pressed, with the exception of two or three things. One, I received a letter from the

ZARGHAMEE-6

Japanese that said that we are willing to reduce our price a few million dollars. And that letter I sent -- this was after it was selected -- I sent to Mr. Ansari. Mr. Ansari said, "If you ... once you have selected and declared, if you want to get trapped in this sort of argument, you can." So we answered it "no."

But usually we did it ... we did it rightfully. We tried to gain as much as possible in the final draft in the negotiations of the terms of the contract. And it was a beautiful contract. In spite of the revolution and all the problems, it was built. It was built successfully, and it's working.

Q. (unclear)

A. That's the important thing.

Q. When was it signed? When was the contract signed?

A. The contract was signed in 197- ... in late 1977 I negotiated. Probably early 1978 it was signed.

Q. And then the construction began ?

A. The construction began immediately, and it went on during

ZARGHAMEE-6

my time. And then, even after the revolution it continued. There were some disruptions. A year or a year and a half of disruptions.

But at no time there were any pressures on me for anything, by anybody. However, one day the head of ... the director of Machine came to my office, and asked me that somebody had approached him and wanted kick-back of some form for their role in negotiation.

I called the minister of industries, who was also Reza Amin at that time, and I told him that such a thing had happened. Anyway, he said, "Ask him to pursue it" and this sort of thing. To the extent that he could document it and give it to the attorney-general's office for prosecution. Apparently that was never ... nothing happened.

Q. (unclear)

What role did the Shah play in decisions relating to the copper company?

A. He was under the impression that the copper was much larger than what it was, and was worth much more than what it really was. Somehow somebody must have given him this idea. Iran has so much copper, and after a lot of work we were able

ZARGHAMEE-6

to prove that the Iranian reserve of ore is so much. And the Shah ... I learned that Mr. Tavakoli had informed the Shah a year before of a number which was higher than the one that we had just established.

So, I think that there was some eagerness on the part of the managing directors to convey the message that this is bigger than what actually exists. But the Shah was With the exception of the decision that he ... I know he had made initially on setting up the firm, and this sort of thing, I only had one audience with him during that time

I only had one audience with him during that time that I told him about the progress of the copper industry. And also I told him of the molybdenum. And the Shah said, "What is molybdenum?" I said, "Well, this ore has a high content of molybdenum. In fact, it would be considered by some as a molybdenum mine, too." He said, "What _i_s molybdenum?" And I explained to him that molybdenum is used in special alloys to make extra-strong steel, which is used primarily for gas pipelines and this sort of thing. Like the pipes that were, for example, used in Russia. They have a high molybdenum content.

And he said immediately, "Why don't you talk to Ardabili of Steel Industries and set up a special alloy plant in Iran?"

ZARGHAMEE-6

We set up in Iran, which is also operational, I heard, a molybdenum plant that creates a concentrate, molybdenum concentrate. We established a foundation for building a molybdenum roasting plant, essentially.

And anyway, he was very much interested in technical discussions that we had at that time. But something really funny happened when I was over there with the Shah, in the only audience that I had with him -- private audience -- during the time I was the head of the copper industries.

Apparently, he suddenly stopped talking to me, picked up the phone, and called Prime Minister Amouzegar. And told him, "Write in the papers that the government would apologize for the action that has taken place, but don't mention the name of the Ayatollah." This was the same day that Havanirou had entered Shariatmadari's home and three people were killed. So the government of Amouzegar officially apologized in that incident.

And I know that this was Something else was on his mind, apparently, because he suddenly stopped talking to me, and picked up the phone, and called Amouzegar, and told him, "Tell them to say in the papers and on television that the government apologizes, but don't mention the name of the

ZARGHAMEE-6

Ayatollah."

Q. And that was it? No other?

A. No, that was it. He hung up. But apparently the prime minister had talked to him of the incident before. And he was thinking about what to do. And, probably that's what he did.

He was very much interested in that time to know when are we going to finish? How we are going to do it? What are the downstream activities? And ... what are you doing? Does it make sense altogether or not?

Q. I'm just a little bit confused on what this construction is. When did exactly the construction begin, and how long did it take? It seems to be ...

A. The construction ... has different elements in it. First, there is a construction of mine and concentrator and smelter. Concentrator essentially ... the ore is 1% copper. The concentrator is about 30% copper. The ore is 90 some-odd percent copper and it's an ore. Then it's the refinery that refines it in an electrolytic refinery. And you get 99.9% copper plates.

ZARGHAMEE-6

Then there is casting. You have to roll it, and make ... mill it: slabs and this sort of thing. Then it's rolling, that you make different sheets, tubes, and this sort of thing.

At the time when I say ... the first ... (?) and Parson was in charge of the concentrator and smelter. Krupp-Machine was in charge of the construction of the casting-plant and refinery. And then the downstream stuff that makes tubes, cables etc, etc. Also a continuous casting, which is a ... plant that would give you rods. The rods would be used for cables and this sort of thing.

Q. So we are going through stages in ...?

A. Yes. This is i_n_d_u_s_t_r_i_e_s -- the plural aspect.

Q. That's why I was a little confused.

Well, actually this question is very much related to the one I just asked, or I just asked you before. Did you have regular audiences with the Shah as Managing Director?

A. One only, and I described it to you.

Q. When did you first sense that the monarchy was about to

be overthrown? Or did you have a sense ...?

A. I think that I really didn't ... I was so involved with my work that I didn't really think that the monarchy was about to be overthrown until the days of the revolution itself.

Q. So you had no inkling about what was about to happen?

A. Well, not in that sense. I was under the impression that probably there is going to be some major changes in Iran. But the major changes I was envisioning probably was more in democratization of the society and this sort of thing, rather than a change of monarchy altogether.

I think that by the time the Shah I mean, the ... Bakhtiar was in power, one was sensing that something was going to go wrong.... And Khomeini had returned to Iran, and this sort of thing.

I think the real I had seen a lot of demonstrations when I was a kid, because our house was close to Se-rah-e Jaleh (Jaleh Corner), right in that area, during the time of Mossadegh. I ... I wasn't under the impression that the monarchy was going to collapse so easily!

ZARGHAMEE-6

Q. You ... Did you have a sense that the Shah was firmly in control?

A. No. I think that I wasn't under the impression that the Shah was firmly in control, but I had more trust in the entire structure of the Iranian regime. I never thought that even if the Shah wasn't entirely in control it would make that much of a difference.

No. I was ... The audience I had The last time I saw the Shah was long ago. I mean, about a year before the revolution, or something close to that -- eight months -- whenever that.... It's a famous day -- it must be in the spring of 1978, I think -- '77 -- spring of 1977.

Q. In late spring.

A. And I At that time he was in power because, if you remember, a few weeks after this incident, the Amouzegar regime put up a massive demonstration in Tabriz. Millions of people came and shouted pro-Shah slogans. That was a fantastic action on the part of Amouzegar and Tavakoli, who was instrumental in that.

So, even by late 1977, it was obvious that ... the Shah was in control. But I ... had a notion that I conveyed to

several people. I said, "Hey. The same thing that happened in the universities is happening on the streets of Tehran. And we have understood that phenomenon, and we could cope with it in some way. At least the way that we coped with it at the university was well-established. And you are doing everything wrong! You are not drawing from the experience that you had ...

"If you want to cope with the problem of the streets, you have to adopt a philosophy of not antagonizing the bystanders. The bystander is going to Let them break windows. Then let's establish some avenues for prosecution. Not even a physical prosecution. At least in the minds of the people you have to establish who is at fault, who is the oppressor, or who is the activist, and who is _z_a_i_l_e_m (the oppressor) and who is _m_a_z_l_o_u_m (the oppressed). I mean, that you have to establish."

But anyway, that didn't get anywhere. It was easy to say, hard to come up with nuts and bolts, and things like that.

Q. To whom did you say that?

A. I talked with our minister. I asked him to convey that to Mr. Amouzegar, which was ... Mr. Amin.

ZARGHAMEE-6

Q. What, if anything, did you and your friends try to do to prevent the collapse of the regime?

A. First you have to recognize that we didn't know the regime was collapsing.

If you look at it from two points of view From the point of view of ... that whatever was happening -- revolution, as the Shah called it even -- was going to create an environment of democratization in Iran, we weren't opposed to that. I mean, we liked it. And if the revolution was supposed to be a mechanism for realization of this level of democratization, fine -- there was nothing wrong with it.

If the revolution was the collapse of the regime, well, we didn't really recognize that the regime was collapsing until very late. And ... well, not much could have been done at that time. We were trying to only make a ... the transition from ... transition smoothly. That's I think what concerned most people. And the transition was really

I was primarily concerned about the lives and safety of so many expatriates that we had. Not only regular expatriates from, say, South Africa or America. One of them, an American, was killed in Kerman during the revolution, who was an agent of the construction firm for local purchases in

ZARGHAMEE-6

Kerman. He was murdered by the revolutionaries. His throat was cut by glass -- rubbing against glass. He was one of the two Americans who died in the revolution in Iran.

I was concerned about their safety. I had lots of Koreans. The Koreans were strong workers. They were electrical workers -- there were not that many of them around in Iran -- who were working on the control equipment. And I had to get them out. And you had to settle their accountant duties, etc. and get them out. This was not easy.

The problem is to pass I mean, I had somewhere around 10,000 people under my direct or indirect supervision. And I wanted to get the company to do a smooth landing. I mean, I didn't want the system to collapse. Even after the revolution, Bazargan wanted me to stay. Well, I know why. Because he didn't have... he couldn't do anything immediately. But I resigned anyway. It was ... it was very hard.

I ... Nobody really ... It wasn't considered a revolution, even after Bazargan had come. Because I didn't see any of the ... immediately except for the institution of the royal palace, and monarchy, no other institution of Iran was subject to immediate change after Bazargan took over. But as time went on, the situation changed.

Q. Well, again this is a follow-up question. Please describe your life and thoughts on the eve of the revolution and the days that followed.

A. I know when the Shah went from Iran, I got And I saw the tremendous happiness that was demonstrated in Iran -- some of them not so pleasant in sight. Somebody, I think he had exposed his bottom or something like that as a demonstration of his exuberance. Anyway, I was sad. I was really sad.

In fact, when I came back to my office -- I was going to visit the minister -- when I came back to my office, somebody had removed the picture of the Shah from the wall, and the traces ... It was done by ... they didn't want, now that the Shah was gone, anybody to come and break anything, so they just as a preventive measure moved all the pictures of the Shah away from ...

And when I looked at that, I was I remember, tears came to my eyes. I mean, why? I don't know.

But then, when the revolution took place, I remember ... I went to.... First of all, I'm talking about Sunday. I stayed home. I remember that day I stayed home, although

ZARGHAMEE-6

Saturday I went to the office, on Sunday I stayed home. And I was getting all the news ... of collapsing one after another the institutions, military complexes, and this sort of thing.

And ... my wife was a medical doctor, and I remember in the middle of this set-up she had to go to the hospital, so I went with her. I was concerned that ... of looting and this sort of thing. I was ... I am just thinking whether I was concerned about my own life -- I mean, that I wasn't concerned about my own life, but I remember I was really trying to think what I would be doing from now on.

I mean, I had a sort of a course of activities that was in the university, and later on in the copper, and I knew that with this I am not going to be in the government any more. I didn't want to be in government any more. That was In fact, I remember, I went the day after ... I went to my father and I started discussing with him that I now want to resign from all... everywhere.

I knew that the best way to go on a line of business which is other than government job ... none of these organizations was solely government, but they were ... for all practical purposes, they were government. I wanted to go into engineering, this sort of thing. Maybe establish a

ZARGHAMEE-6

consulting firm, or work with somebody who has a consulting firm.

But anyway, I was more concerned at that time with I wasn't too concerned about what is going to happen to me. I was looking at the stuff, and I was ... just concerned about myself, I suppose. And in the sense of a very futuristic type of thing -- not immediate concern.

The revolution was ... took place with a lot of order. And I knew that I mean, I wasn't feeling concerned about myself at all. In fact, I was shocked when I was ... when I went back to the university, and one of the students said that "We want to take you to jail!" I went to the jail, and I talked to the person, and I wanted to leave. Because they took me to ... so that they examine the papers and see whether they need me or not, they want me to stay or not. But I told the guy, "I have a four o'clock appointment, and I have to leave."

I never considered that I would be of the kind that would be kept there. For four and a half months. But they had ... well, I didn't have all the information.

Q. The next questions have to do with the period when you were in jail. If you would like, this is ... please describe

ZARGHAMEE-6

the circumstances under which you were arrested and imprisoned.

A. I went to the university. One of the students came to me -- probably he was intrigued by one of the faculty members from that union I was talking about -- and, very politely, asked me to follow him. I went to the guards' building -- the university guards' building. He had a machine-gun with him, but it was under his Many students were carrying a machine-gun at that time, because they I mean, all these machine-guns were released, and many of these students participated in the orgy.

Anyway, I went to the guard building. They were extremely polite. And then after a few minutes, the guy came in and told me, "We have requested ... the revolutionary attorney general whether they need you for imprisonment, and they have said 'no'. So we are ... we have sent all the classified files of the university, in which your signature appears, to them for a decision." I said, "OK."

And anyway, apparently the answer never came. After a while, he came and said, "We have to take you there, because the answer never came." So they took me there, and ... over the ... I went to Zand-e Ghasr (Ghasr Prison), and there was ... I went to a ... They took me very politely, but the cars

ZARGHAMEE-6

that these Komite-h members had belonged to the chief of police or something, because it was Mercedes and this sort of thing.

Anyway, they took me there. And then a man came, with a beard. And he started questioning me. The questions were ... he was going through the file, and he was asking, "What is this document? What is your relationship?" He asked me two or three questions: "What was your relationship to the Shah? What was your relationship to SAVAK?" And I told him that I ... the Shah was this guy, and I had met him several times. "And what was your relationship to SAVAK?" I told him I had no special relationship, except what is in the course of one's duties as....

And then they asked me about specific documents. They didn't know much about the organization set-up in Iran, because they were asking a lot of dumb questions. Anyway, and then I ...

Finally I told them that: "Hey! I have devoted all my life in education, and I believe in education. I have built a university. And ... I believe that the only way to the prosperity of the future of Iran is in educating the youth of the country." And he said that, "Well, you're a reformist, and we are a revolutionary, and our two paths are different."

ZARGHAMEE-6

Q. (unclear)

A. Agreed.

Anyway, I later told him that "I have to go because I have an appointment at four o'clock, and you asked me these questions, and I answered." The intention was never "You cannot keep me here because you have declared on the newspapers and radio that nobody... -- if there is no complaint, you cannot arrest anybody."

He said, he turned around and asked the guy, "Is there any complaint?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, I have been at the university, if there is any complaint, you can ask the students." Because there were a number of students who were working, especially the Mojahedin group, who were working in the prison. Apparently the prison was held in the hands of Mojahedin, at least the administration part. Or people who were pro-Mojahedin, maybe because of more religious inclinations that they had.

But there were a lot of students. So he went and gathered all the students of Aryamehr University who were working inside Ghasr. And there were ten or twelve of them who came inside the room. He said, "Does anybody have a complaint against this gentleman?" Very polite. And the guys ...

Nobody uttered a word.

One of them came forward and said, "When I was ... When we were in the university, one day you called me and you said, 'Go see SAVAK and ... because they want you ... and when you get out ... call me immediately.'" That was true. Because they I didn't want SAVAK to interfere as much as possible, so I told them, "Whatever you want to do to my students, which is official, based on your authority as ..., you have to do it through me."

So they called one day, and said, "We need to talk to this boy." I said, "If you are going to arrest him, I'm not going to stay behind this desk. I'm ... to go home." He said, "No, we are not going to arrest him. We just want to talk to him." So I called the guy and said, "Go over there and talk to them. And when you come back"

I said, "What else did I tell you?" He said, "You said that if you don't call me by eleven O'clock, I will go home and I will not return to this." So, that sort of even strengthened my position in front of the guy. The guy said, "OK. We are going to ask Haj Agha whether we can release you or not." Apparently the file with the recommendation or something was sent to a Haj Agha who was an Ahan-Foroush or something in charge of prisons. Haj Agha looked at the file, and says:

"Niyabat-e toliyat-e ozma?" ("What is this?").

The guy came back and said, "What is 'niyabat-e toliyat-e ozma'?" And I said, "Well, 'niyabat- toliyat-e ozma' means Well, the English translation of that is 'Vice-Chancellor' or something like that." (And that is what they called the chancellor of the university.) He said, "Haj Agha migouyand toliyat-e ozma" ("Haj Agha said: 'Who is toliyat-e ozma?'") I said, "Shah." He said, "Toliyat-e ozma is Shah?" Haj Agha decided that since I was "vice" to the Shah, I should stay.

And I said, "Why don't you declare in the university if there is any complaint?" Because I had raised a technical issue. And: "We are going to keep you." I was under the impression that after one or two days I would be released. Apparently there was no complaint of any consequence, and finally they released me after four and a half months.

Q. (unclear)



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DIRECTOR: HABIB LADJEVARZI
PROCESSING SUPERVISOR: ZIA SEDGHI
TRANSCRIBER: MARGARET DUBOIS

NARRATOR: MEHDI ZARGHAMEE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 28, 1985
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: ARLINGTON, MA
INTERVIEWER: SHAHLA HAERI
TAPE NO.: 7
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZARGH ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 07

ABADAN, CINEMA REX FIRE OF

ALAM, ASADOLLAH, BACKGROUND AND CHARACTER OF

ALIKHANI, ALI-NAGHI

AMIN, MOHAMMAD-REZA

AMOLEGAR, JAMSHID, AS PRIME MINISTER

ANSARY, HUSHANG

ARAFAT, YASSER

ASHRAF, PRINCESS

ESHBAL, MANOUCHEHR, BACKGROUND & CHARACTER OF

FADAIYAN-E ISLAM

FARAH, SHAHBANOU, ACTIVITIES OF

HOVEIDA, AMIR-ABBAS, AS PRIME MINISTER

HOVEIDA, AMIR-ABBAS, BACKGROUND & CHARACTER OF

MEHRAN, ALI-REZA

MOJANEDIN-E KHALGH, SAIMEH

MOJTEHEDI, MOHAMMAD-ALI

NASR, HOSSEIN

RASTAKHIZ PARTY

REVOLUTION OF 1979, ARRESTS FOLLOWING THE

REZA, PROFESSOR ?

SAVAK

SAVAK, MEMBERS OF THE

SHAH, MASSSES & THE

SHARIF-EMAMI, JAFAR, AS PRIME MINISTER

03-10-87

INDEX OF TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR: ZORON ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI
TAPE NO.: 07

SHARIF-ENAMI, JAFAR, BACKGROUND & CHARACTER OF

SEE HIS TAPES

07

ZARGHAMEE, MEHDI

ZARGHAMEE-7

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
IRANIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Narrator: Mehdi Zarghamee

Date: February 28, 1985

Place: Arlington, MA

Interviewer: Shahla Haeri

Tape no: 7

Q. (unclear) If you would like to continue....

A. No, that's it. That's how I got arrested.

Q. How was life in prison? (unclear)

A. Well, life in prison started At the beginning it was very hard. There were about 40 students of Tehran University who were pro-Shah, and they were all arrested for gathering and ... under the title of "Mashrouteh", "Constitutionalists".

Anyway, they were in prison, and as soon as I came in, they received me. They had created a very lively atmosphere

ZARGHAMEE-7

inside the prison. The prison was horrible! I mean, it was a hole essentially, and a lot of restrictions.

At the beginning there was a lot of danger to one's life, because they were randomly taking people and killing, also. Executions were conducted at night, and this sort of thing. Probably you have heard that, because you must have interviewed others from prison. Anyway, the ... we soon started ... there were no reading materials, nothing. After a month or so, there were ... the situation relaxed a little bit, after ...

And then the executions picked up again. Until executions somewhere toward the late summer -- sort of middle of the summer -- stopped altogether, except for sporadic executions. But massive killings were going on. People were getting released at that time, or executed. But it was quick. By the time I was imprisoned, which was ... I was arrested on the 20th of Esfand. Then ... executions went on for a few days, it sort of stopped, it picked up again. But it stopped in mid-summer altogether -- with some sporadic, here and there.

At the beginning we were very restricted -- about 400 people in sort of cold, prison environment, awfully bad weather.

ZARGHAMEE-7

And essentially the food was lousy. We were given Sixteen of us, I remember, we slept in a room which was about 16 x 12 feet - square feet, I mean. 16 x 12, which is 4 meters by 5 meters, something like that. And ... the prisoners who comprised a bunch of military people, a bunch of SAVAKIs, and sort of a third group of civilians.

The SAVAKIs were relatively safe, although what was on the outside was really that the SAVAKIs were getting into prison and executed. The SAVAKIs were safe; nothing was happening to them. The civilians, some of them that had cooperated at certain places with the previous regime in the sense of demolishing the revolution, or preventing the revolution, they were executed very rapidly. But the rest of them were safe. By and large, the civilians were safe.

The military people were not safe at all. They were killing military. And this is really I mean, this sort of convinces me more that Mojahedin were in power, and they wanted to dismantle the military, as it were.

I was amazed by pictures of ... Fada'iyan-e Eslam on the wall. Pictures of PLO chief Yasser Arafat on the wall -- kissing Khomeini. A lot of pictures of Khomeini, of course -- I wasn't amazed by that.

But anyway, that was Later on, we set up a reading, and we started reading lots of books, because we could get books from outside, so ... we exchanged.

Q. Were they smuggled?

A. No, they permitted us. The only book The first book that I read there, which was the only one that was available, was the Koran. A (?) Koran, remnant of the Shah's regime.

Anyway, after four and a half months, we had a fire. And the next day, as we were cleaning the ... \sout\{whistle}, they called my name, and said, "We are releasing you. You are free to go." No questioning in the interim.

Q. So the first day they arrested you, and they just kept you there. They didn't let you call your family, or ...

A. No, no. I requested, and they said, "Please." And I called my family. Apparently, the guys, because I was chancellor of the university, or some of them were my students, my own students, they were very polite. I remember, one of them came with me to the prison, and told

ZARGHAMEE-7

the guy, "This is a special guy. Extend all possible privileges." So I ... when I went to prison, I had my tie, and this sort of thing.

And I understand some of the SAVAKIs were badly beaten at the time of arrest and afterwards, or.... But I was treated with a lot of respect.

Q. So. Were you actually charged with any particular crime?

A. No.

Q. Nothing.

You started talking about the reading group in prison. Could you describe some more of that?

A. Well, we started getting various.... There were a bunch of us that were there, including ... a number of ... cabinet members of Bakhtiar, including Hosseinali Bakhtiar, Aryana, and ... also a number of Amouzegar and Hoveida cabinet members, and others that, ... We used to read a lot. I mean, just continuously read there.

Q. You were all in the same group together?

A. Well, we were in the same "band" (cell-block). Some of us were in the same room, others were in other rooms, or separate parts of the "band". But we could exchange books and this sort of thing.

Q. Did you read together? Or did you read ...?

A. Well, we were reading ... we were exchanging books, and reading them quickly, and discussing it afterwards. And creating hypothetical situations, and then trying to resolve, discuss what are the issues, and this sort of thing, how Some of the very interesting discussions were conducted while we were in prison. This was primarily to keep the mind working.

Q. What were some of those issues you discussed?

A. Oh, anything from housing, from really the I mean, it was ... related to topics like poverty, social, political, technical topics. We selected, we read about it, we discussed it -- even very Islamic topics like the foundation of the philosophy of Islam, as explained by Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna) -- this sort of thing -- and the errors, logical

ZARGHAMEE-7

errors, that they had made, and this sort of thing.

Q. Did you try to get any of your jailers involved?

A. No, they were dumb. They were dumb. They were kids, dumb.

Q. OK. Please tell me which of the following historical figures, that you have personally known, you'd be willing to describe. I'm going to read you the list.

Dr. Manouchehr Eghbal.

A. Dr. Manouchehr Eghbal. I knew him. He was quite a patriot. He was ... he loved the Shah. He loved the regime, and he would do whatever he could for its preservation. He was considered senile by Hoveida and others in the last years of his life. But whenever I had a problem or something, he was there, and he would help. He would help young people who were, in his mind, motivated to build the country or do something.

Q. Sharif-Emami -- Ja'afar Sharif-Emami.

A. I knew Sharif-Emami. He was also a member of the board

ZARGHAMEE-7

of trustees, and I knew him. He was a religious man. He used to ... he never drank wine or liquor or this sort of thing. He used to pray regularly. He was essentially conducting all the Jalaseh Kai'at Omana (meetings of the Board of Trustees). He knew of the ... He was a good law-maker, in the sense that he ... when he wanted to write something, he knew what to do and how to do it. He was very highly respected by everybody. That's the extent of my familiarity. The Shah liked him very much.

Q. In terms of ... capabilities and qualities as an administrator and prime minister, do you have any observations about ...?

A. Well, at the time he was prime minister, I know the consequences of what happened. He was ... he tried to solve a problem, and he didn't have the ... really, he didn't have the means of solving it. I would not be ... I would not label him as "kha'en (traitor) or something like that, if that's the question.

Q. No, no. (unclear)

A. He tried to do something, and he tried to do it at that time. I am under the impression that he was somewhat

ZARGHAMEE-7

corrupt, but that's a impression, it is just hearsay -- I don't have first-hand knowledge.

Q. Mehdi Bazargan.

A. I didn't know him personally.

Q. Asadollah Alam.

A. He was kind. His father knew my grandfather, and he had a high respect for me because of the family that he knew well. And I think that, if he could help something, he would. He was a very capable administrator in that regard. I mean, ... At the same time, I know that much of the problems were created because of his specific view. But this is not my intimate information -- again, it's hearsay. I mean, I don't have personal experience or something. I met him several times, and I talked to him once or twice. I was never very close to him.

Q. Shahbanou Farah.

A. I met her several times. Once I went to see her about a concept that I had about creating a center for -- or we had -- creating a center for theoretical physics on an

ZARGHAMEE-7

international ... And I talked to her at length. I talked to her about the concept of the Aryamehr University, also. She later on selected me on a, sort of a bunch of free-lance advisors for direction of research in Iran.

Q. Shahbanou?

A. Shahbanou. And I was working with Madjidi and several others -- Najmabadi, Madjidi, and some others -- in order to come up with a, sort of a, what is the concept of My position was unique because I was ... in favor of pure, theoretical research as opposed to many people, like Najmabadi, who said we have to do nuts and bolts type of research. I was more in favor of creating a culture, a scientific culture, in Iran, rather than solving the leaking oil somewhere.

Q. How did she receive the problem and discuss it?

A. Oh, whenever I met the Shahbanou in these regards, I was sitting down. I mean, it was very informal in that regard. I don't recall ever meeting the Shahbanou in which I was standing up like the audience with the Shah. I was sitting down, and I was Many times I was nervous and sweating, but most of the time I was relaxed, and she would ask me if I

wanted to smoke, and she would give me a cigarette, and
Anyway, it was very informal, in that regard.

She was arguing back and forth, and I was arguing along with her. I mean, that It was a very normal type of meeting rather than an audience. Most of the ... I mean, the two or three times I went there, was primarily based on research. She wanted my opinion or my contribution in a discussion that involved research.

Yes, once we went with some of the chancellors of universities, because we were addressing questions like Hei'at-e Omana (Board of Trustees), and things of that nature. Once or twice.

Q. Why was she interested in research?

A. She was ... somehow, toward the end, from 1975-76 -- '76-'77 -- she became very much interested in research, and she became somehow the head of the Royal Academy of Science or Research Institute -- something to that extent, I don't know exactly the title.

And she was interested to sort of formulate a general research policy. And I was one of the proponents of science

ZARGHAMEE-7

as a main, rather than ..., as opposed to people who were more on the applied part. I had a very unique position in that regard, that unless a good scientific basis is established, it's very hard to make people to go to ad hoc experts in the country instead of the country of origin where they bought the instrument from.

Q. Amir-Abbas Hoveida.

A. I met Amir-Abbas Hoveida several times, and I discussed with him. Usually under ... I mean, whenever something rose that he wanted to see me in that regard. Or we had a problem with this union, and this sort of thing. By and large, he was very smart. He was ...

I think he was a good prime minister. He understood the issues very fast. Many of these other people you mentioned, they never understood the issues. He had an analytical mind, in the sense that he could take a problem apart and find a solution.

He was well-read. I remember that he quoted from a book, in one of our meetings, called 'The Art of War.' And he suddenly made a quotation from that, and I recognized it. This is a very strange book, and not many people have read it. It's

ZARGHAMEE-7

written several thousand years ago in China, and translated. And I came up with another quotation from the book -- I don't remember {what} -- and he was impressed that I had read it also.

Q. When you say he was aware of the issues, do you mean the social issues?

A. Well, many of the people in the Shah's regime, they thought that opposition doesn't exist. Maybe they were kept away. And unless you are in the university But he knew. You didn't have to... You had a hard time, probably, to tell the Shah, "There are people who don't believe in you." But I don't think you had that much problem with the prime minister to convince him that there is a large number of people who don't believe "Aala Hazrat Shahanshah Aryamehr Arvahan Fadah, etc., etc." (His Imperial Majesty, King of Kings, Light of the Aryans, for whom our souls shall be sacrificed, etc., etc.).

Q. Jamshid Amouzegar.

A. Jamshid Amouzegar. I know him. Again, he was on the board of trustees, and I had come in contact with him. He was ... he was a technocrat. He didn't have the

ZARGHAMEE-7

socio-political grasp of the situation that Hoveida had. But he was ... he tried to ... He was very naive to a certain respect. He was naive and

He didn't enjoy the cooperation of SAVAK, I know. Because SAVAK was essentially in the hands of Hoveida. And all those people were Hoveida people. And somehow, when Amouzegar came, he didn't know. In fact, he had complained several times, that even he didn't hear of what happened in the Rex Cinema until he read it in the newspapers. What kind of prime minister is this, that has to read one of the biggest issues of the country, at a time of turmoil, in the newspapers?

But, he.... Anyway, I would say that he was a correct man. He had certain infatuations with decentralization and this sort of thing. He was.... I could distinguish between technical bologna and technically sound ideas. This was an advantage he had over Hoveida, but socially and politically he wasn't of the same caliber and he wasn't ... he didn't have that grasp. My experience is also limited.

Q. Alineghi Alikhani.

A. Alikhani was an extremely bright man and he was I

ZARGHAMEE-7

know him. I have been with him on several occasions. He's a very bright man. And he contributed He was one of the very few people who stood ... who came to Aryamehr University, collected, gathered all the students, and he asked them

He delivered a lecture on the economy of Iran. And he said, "Ask me questions." And the students started asking embarrassing questions and he started to answer them. And he went through with that. And finally all the students stood up and clapped for ... 10 minutes.

And then, on the other hand, he was also in SAVAK, and these sort of things, initially, but ... apparently that His initial association with SAVAK. Of course, that was SAVAK of Mr. -- what's the guy before Nasiri? (Pakravan) Anyway. With that SAVAK it is something else, but anyway.

He was well-respected amongst most people. And in two or three times that I met him and I dealt with him, he showed brilliance.

I was ... I met him in Ramsar several times, and spent some hours, because I was going as the head of planning, development and research of Aryamehr University at the time.

ZARGHAMEE-7

And he was chancellor of Tehran University. And he was a close friend of Amin, so used to play bridge.

Q. Houshang Ansari.

A. Houshang Ansari. I dealt with him several times. Again, he seemed to be a bright person. I remember, Iran wanted to buy a copper mine in Mexico. He sent it, he asked me to analyze it, and to give him a recommendation. I made an analysis and came up with the recommendation that Iran shouldn't buy. But what he wanted and the way he went about it was very proper.

When I was chancellor of the university, he wanted me to join his -- what was it -- his faction of the Rastakhiz Party, and he said, "You lay yourself and the university in my hands, and I'll do anything for you." I didn't. I said, "Well, that's I mean, actually ... politics ... the Rastakhiz Party is supposed to be an individual's choice. How can I do that?"

Q. (?) factions in the Rastakhiz Party...

A. There were two factions, one of them under Ansari, the other one was under Amouzegar, if you recall, at the

ZARGHAMEE-7

beginning.

Q. Dr. Shahpour Bakhtiar.

A. I don't know.

Q. Shah Mohammad Reza.

A. I think he was ... he was a well-wishing person. I saw a lot of patriotism in him. I saw a lot of ... sort of ... I didn't see a villain, I saw always a democratic person. I ... don't think that if the situation was somewhat different, and ... he would end up like this. I think that a lot of judgment that we pass on him is a matter of several incidents that took place, including the revolution -- important incidents. I think, by and large, he wasn't a powerful dictator.

He wasn't an oppressor. When you talked to him, you would feel it. I was in prison, and I saw people who were in SAVAK, who had this attitude -- especially people in SAVAK -- that ... I mean, ... of ... they had a sort of natural right to anything. He wasn't that kind. At least, during the several times that I met him, he didn't demonstrate himself to be that kind.

But nevertheless, the country was run as such that he was that kind of person. I don't know what happened. I don't know what was really ... what were the historical events that led to the country being run although the person is not really that kind of person. I suppose whatever happened in Iran is the consequence of a number of historical events, including the assassination attempt on him at the University of Tehran, the incidents at the time of Mossadeq, even getting kicked out and coming back,

And then, later on, the role of the mullahs, the role of Fada'iyan, or whatever is the history of Iran, created a role that, if any other person was in his shoes, probably would end up in the same position.

A lot of people are really are made by history. And some people make history. Well, he was made by history. As opposed to Khomeini, who made history. That's what I think of him.

Q. (unclear)

A. (unclear)

ZARGHAMEE-7

Q. Ok. Ashraf. Princess Ashraf.

A. I met her once and she was the kind that the Shah wasn't. I mean, she was really an oppressor by ... she really demonstrated that ... she's somebody, and she wants to operate -- an operator at heart. The two characters But I judge ... probably I judge her because of the ... my previous visualization of what she would be like, so when I saw her it just reinforced my previous position. Let's put it this way: I didn't see anything from her to get an idea other than the public opinion.

Q. I would like you to comment on each of the Aryamehr University chancellors. Starting from the first one.

A. Well, the first one was Mojtahedi. Mojtahedi was a builder, who came to the university, and started setting it up. One of the hardest things is setting up. But it's the most enjoyable. And he did that. He had no conception of the philosophy of education, and research, and what was going to be done inside those rooms and halls and laboratories that he set up.

Then after that, Professor Reza came, who was really a guy who had the knowledge, intimate knowledge, of what should be

ZARGHAMEE-7

done there. And he laid the foundation for doing that. He changed the educational structure to be able to accomodate this.

Then Reza Amin came. Reza Amin is ... was a guy who is a tremendous administrator. He deals with people properly. And he succeeded to create a lot of ... the infrastructure for the administration of the university: the laws, the regulations, this, that. He injected that element that was at the university, which was democratization of the process of decision-making, which was there. And a by-product of that was the union formation that started at his time.

Dr. Nasr was the next chancellor of the university. He was ... he has extremely good ideas. He can analyze a situation, come up with the roots of the problems with his taint of Islam and culture and things of that nature. He's not a very good implementer of ideas. I think that if he would bunch up with somebody, and would get intimate, with him, then the two -- combination of the two -- can be really powerful. Because implementing is different ... requires different attention, a different level of attention and dedication.

The last one is me. I don't comment on myself.

ZARGHAMEE-7

The one after me was Alireza Mehran. Alireza Mehran was a very trustworthy, straight man. A good researcher, in his kind. Anyway, he was really a right man for a smaller institution at a time of less turmoil. It just happened that in his time there was lots of turmoil. And the set-up of the university and the problems were too much for him. He would have made an excellent head of a department, or this sort of thing.

Many of these people -- I am not talking about him, I'm talking about myself and other people -- we were out-promoted. The reason is this: that Iran lacked a high administration, and a lot of people were over-promoted, beyond their range of normal capabilities. But that's the characteristic of a developing country, rapidly developing country.

Q. Thank you very much.

A. Well, you are welcome.